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THE STORMING OF SERINGAPATAM.

THE

VICTORIES

OF

THE BRITISH ARMIES;

WITH ANECDOTES ILLUSTRATIVE OF MODERN WARFARE.

36327 a.c

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"STORIES OF WATERLOO," "CAPTAIN BLAKE," "WILD SPORTS OF THE WEST," "THE BIVOUAC," &c.

"It is the memory which the soldier leaves behind him, like the long train of light that follows the sunken sun. * * * When I think of death, as a thing worth thinking of, it is in the hope of pressing one day some well-fought and hard-won field of battle, and dying with the shout of victory in my ear—*that* would be worth dying for; and more, it would be worth having lived for!"

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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THE

VICTORIES AND CONQUESTS

OF

THE BRITISH ARMY.

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THE history of military nations exhibits periods of disaster and success, when good and evil fortune, as if ruled by a fatality, prevail. With some, in every essay conquest crowns their arms; while the bravest efforts of others terminate invariably in defeat. Again, the best measures fail to obtain success,—mischances follow thick upon each other,—possessions are lost,—power declines,—and a name, before which a world once trembled, becomes a by-word, and is rarely used but to mark the mutability of national prosperity.

In looking back on past events, perhaps the gloomiest period of British history will be found between the outbreak of the war of independence, in Seventeen hundred and seventy-five, and that of the French revolution at the close of the last century. Conquest deserted those banners which for ages she had crowned with victory, and the days of England's glory seemed departed. Her military dispositions were rendered nugatory by a thousand accidental occurrences, which no human prudence could foresee. Disciplined valour was defeated by the raw levies of her own colonists, and her continental influence placed in abeyance for a time by those splendid victories, achieved by the armies of the French Republic, over the best organised and best commanded troops in Europe.

Had the pride alone of Britain been lowered by the failure of her arms, that circumstance would have been sufficiently humiliating; but far more disastrous consequences resulted from these continued defeats. The North American colonies were wrested from the parent country, never to be recovered; and a retention of her Indian possessions became a very doubtful question. French influence, too successfully employed with almost every European cabinet, had already reached the East; and the native princes, ripe for revolt, were only awaiting a fitting moment to throw off the mask, and by an appeal to arms, free themselves from the thrall of a power whom in secret they

both dreaded and detested. This state of things was pregnant, indeed, with danger to Great Britain; but bold and well-digested measures saved her in this her political extremity; and, when everything was most heavily overcast, the first promise of returning prosperity dawned, and a future tide of conquest flowed from her earlier successes in the East.

In 1797 the Marquis of Wellesley was nominated to the Government of India; and on arriving at the Presidency, found the British interests environed by a thousand perils. Most of the native powers were avowedly inimical, or secretly ill-disposed. It was known that the Sultaun of Mysore was in active communication with the French Directory; that he had tendered his alliance; that in return he had received an assurance of co-operation, and the assistance of European officers to train his troops, accompanied by a liberal supply of warlike stores. Tippoo was also endeavouring to influence Zemaun Schah to make a diversion on the northern frontier of the English territory; and pressing the Mahratta powers to join the league, and make common cause against the British by a simultaneous revolt. Scindia was notoriously devoted to the French, and of course the Court of Deccan was unfriendly. The Rajah of Berar was more than suspected of disaffection; and Holkar, if not a declared enemy, could not be regarded as a friend.

In this ominous aspect of Eastern affairs, nothing could have preserved India to Great Britain but prompt and daring measures — for Lord Wellesley at once perceived that war was inevitable. The proclamation of the governor of the Isle of France, and the landing on the coast of Malabar of officers and men for Tippoo's service, hurried the crisis. A premature declaration would, however, have been impolitic. The British armies were not ready for the field,—their material was incomplete—their organization imperfect,—and, until these deficiencies were remedied, Lord Wellesley determined to delay the hour of hostile movements; and this, with admirable tact, he managed to accomplish.

It was an object of paramount importance to interrupt the native relations, if possible, and detach the Nizam from the Sultaun of Mysore. The army of the former amounted to fourteen thousand men, officered and disciplined by French mercenaries. The Marquis applied himself to effect a new treaty, by which the force at Hyderabad should be augmented, and the French officers dismissed from the service of the prince. These objects were happily effected. A moveable column was despatched from Fort William, reached Hyderabad by forced marches, and, assisted by the Nizam's cavalry, surrounded the infantry, arrested the officers, and disarmed the sepoys. The Governor-general, finding himself now in an

attitude to commence hostilities, addressed a remonstrance to Tippoo, which was unnoticed for some time. The advance of the British army produced an unsatisfactory reply; and, on the 22nd, war was formally declared.

The British force with which this short and brilliant campaign was opened and completed, consisted of the army of the Carnatic, under General Harris, and that of Cannanore, commanded by Colonel Stuart. Including the corps at Hyderabad, and the infantry of the Nizam, the former amounted to thirty thousand men, to which a cavalry corps of six thousand sabres was united. These were a contingent of the Nizam, and commanded by an officer of his own, his son, Meer Allum. The Western, or Cannanore corps, numbered about six thousand five hundred.

On the 5th of March the army of the Carnatic crossed the frontier, and carried some hill forts with trifling opposition, while the corps under Stuart marched direct on Seringapatam. Ascertaining that his capital was threatened, Tippoo broke up from his cantonments, intending to attack the army of the Carnatic; but suddenly changing his plans, he hurried with the *élite* of his infantry to meet the division from Cannanore.

Never was the field taken with deadlier animosity to an enemy, than that with which Tippoo regarded his antagonists. Like Hannibal's to Rome, the hatred of the Sultaun to Britain, was heredi-

tary and implacable. In the infancy of English glory, a foe like him was reckoned truly formidable. His military talents were considerable; and, with excellent judgment, and untrammelled by Eastern presumption, he saw the defects of native discipline, and laboured to remove them. He had striven, and with success, through the agency of Europeans, to introduce into his camp the improved systems of modern warfare; and the army of the Mysore had, within a few years, undergone a mighty change. Many confidential communications that passed between the Sultaun and his chief officers, were found after the fall of the capital, and prove with what assiduity he had devoted his whole attention to the establishment of a force that, by physical and numerical superiority, should crush a power he detested, and overthrow England's dominion in the East. Tippoo's infantry were tolerably drilled—his artillery very respectable; and though his numerous horse were quite unequal to meet and repel the combined charge of British cavalry, as irregulars, they were excellent; alike dangerous to an enemy from their rapid movement, the audacity with which their sudden assault was made, and the celerity, when repulsed, with which their retreat was effected.

On the 5th, the Sultaun's camp was indistinctly seen from the British outposts. Four native battalions, commanded by Colonel Montressor, were

in advance at Seedaseer, and the remainder of the division cantoned at a distance of from eight to twelve miles in the rear. The country was difficult and wooded; and to troops who were acquainted with its localities, extremely favourable for taking an enemy by surprise. From the detached position of the different brigades, Tippoo could attack them in detail, and press with an overwhelming force the leading regiments under Montressor, and probably cut them off before they could be supported from the rear. So favourable an opportunity was not to be neglected, and the Sultaun made his dispositions to attack the British division the next morning.

A deep jungle lay between him and the British—and at nine o'clock he passed through the brushwood undiscovered, and threw himself furiously on the front and flanks of Montressor's brigade. Though surprised, and assailed under very discouraging circumstances by a force immensely superior in point of numbers, the sepoys behaved with veteran steadiness, and fought most gallantly. Every effort made by Tippoo to shake their formation failed. For five hours these native regiments sustained furious and repeated attacks unsupported; and not until Stuart, after considerable opposition from the Sultaun's troops, who had gained the rear of Montressor, came up and relieved this hard-pressed brigade, did the fiery Sultaun desist from the assault. Unable

longer to withstand the united force opposed to him, Tippoo retired in disorder, leaving fifteen hundred of his best troops upon the field, while the British loss scarcely amounted to one hundred and fifty.

Completely repulsed by the division of Cannanore, the Sultaun did not renew the attack, but moved again to Bangalore, and came up with the army of the Carnatic. After a cavalry demonstration, which a few cannon-shot checked, Tippoo fell back on his capital; on which General Harris continued his march with all the despatch his defective means of transport would permit.

The army of the Carnatic, taking the southern road to Seringapatam, passed Kaukunhully unopposed, crossed the Madoor, and on the 27th reached Malavelly, where Tippoo was drawn up in order of battle. Anxious to bring on an action, Colonel Wellesley, with the Nizam's troops, the 33rd European regiment, and Floyd's cavalry, advanced against the left, while General Harris attacked the right. For a time, Tippoo, by a rocket-discharge and a brisk cannonade, strove to arrest these forward movements. But the British advanced steadily, and no effort the Sultaun could make could check them. A fine body of his best troops, amounting to two thousand, came boldly forward and attacked the 33rd. Their reserved fire was received by the British at some sixty yards, and answered by a bayonet-

rush. The Sultaun's infantry broke,—the British cavalry charged home,—no quarter was given,—and an immense number of the bravest of the native troops were bayoneted or cut down.

Following up his success, Harris crossed the Cauvery, Tippoo contenting himself with making a close reconnaissance on the 2nd and 4th, as the British defiled along the heights. On the 5th, the whole army took up its ground in front of the city, and made preparations for immediately commencing the siege.

Seringapatam stands on an island of a bare and desolate appearance, formed by the river Cauvery, which here divides itself into separate streams. The waters creep sluggishly along for nearly three miles, when they again become united. This insulated surface is in no place above a mile across, and on its upper extremity the city is built, both channels of the river flowing immediately beneath its walls.*

The fortifications are in the Eastern style, the works irregular, and the defences rather numerous than well-constructed. Several walls, one within the other, connect bastions of different

* At the commencement of the siege the garrison numbered twenty thousand men of all arms, and more than two hundred and fifty pieces of cannon were mounted on the works. Indeed Tippoo's arsenal was amply stocked with artillery, more than six hundred pieces, in all the variety of Indian calibre, having fallen into the hands of the English after the capture of the place.

forms; some being the ancient Hindu tower, while others are of regular proportions, and formed from the designs of European engineers. The point of attack chosen by the British commander was the north-west angle of the fort; and on the arrival of the Bombay army, which joined on the evening of the 14th, the siege was vigorously pressed.

The besiegers' camp was judiciously selected, and distant from the west face of the works about three thousand five hundred paces. The right occupied a height, while the left was protected by the Cauvery and an aqueduct. The rear was effectually secured by steep ravines, and the watercourse that supplied the greater canal. There were several topes* within the lines, thickly planted with cocoa-trees and bamboos, thus afford-

* After a night attack on one of these in front of the position, from which the besiegers had been greatly annoyed by a constant discharge of musketry, a curious incident occurred while returning in the dark to the lines. Lieutenant Lambton came up, and assured the general to whose staff he was attached, that the troops, instead of marching *from*, were marching *on* the enemy. The guide, on being referred to, was obstinate in asserting that he was right, while Lambton declared that in the star-light he had clearly ascertained that instead of moving to the southward, the troops were marching directly *north!* Baird procured a pocket-compass, and, putting a fire-fly on the glass, ascertained that his march was erroneous, and his guide entirely astray. Fortunately, he had time to remedy the mistake, jocularly observing, that "in future he should put more faith in the stars than he had done formerly."

ing ample means for constructing ladders and fascines. The place was healthy, the water pure and abundant, and it possessed all the security of an intrenched camp.

A part of the position, however, in front of Tippoo's advanced posts, was within range of musketry and rockets, and it was necessary that from these the enemy should be dislodged. A night attack, under the command of Colonels Wellesley and Shaw, was unsuccessful, and attended with considerable loss. On the following day the whole line was stormed; the right and left flanks and centre being simultaneously assaulted, under a heavy cannonade. On every point the attacks succeeded, and a line of posts was gained, reaching from Sultaunpet to the Cauvery, and advanced within eighteen hundred yards of the fortress. On the west the Bombay army were securely established within a thousand paces of that angle of the fort; while a watercourse was seized on the south, and allowed that face of the works to be invested within less than nine hundred yards.

The siege was vigorously pressed on. An intrenchment was stormed on the evening of the 20th; and a parallel opened within seven hundred and eighty paces of the works. On the 22nd the garrison made a grand sortie, and fell in considerable force upon the Bengal army; but their sustained efforts were repulsed, and they

were driven into the town with a loss of six hundred men. On the 26th, the enemy having intrenched themselves behind a watercourse only three hundred and eighty yards from the place, it was deemed advisable to obtain its possession. It was accordingly assaulted in gallant style, and carried, after an obstinate defence, that cost both the victors and the vanquished a serious loss of life.

On the 30th a battery was unmasked, and commenced breaching the bastion; and on the 2nd of May another was completed, and opened a heavy fire on the curtain to the right. Several guns of large calibre were gradually got to work. The old masonry, unable to support this well-served and well-sustained cannonade, began to yield. Masses of the wall came down into the ditch. A breach in the fausse-braye was reported practicable—and on the 3rd of May the face of the bastion was in such a state of ruin, that preparations were made for an immediate assault; and in a brief letter,* orders to that effect were given next morning to Major-General Baird, who had volunteered to command the storming party.

* SIR,

The breach being reported practicable, the Commander-in-chief desires that the assault may be made this day at one P. M.

I have the honour, &c. &c.

(Signed) BARRY CLOSE, Adjt.-Gen. &c. &c.

Head Quarters, Camp, 4th May 1799.

That the capture of Seringapatam should, to a certain extent, have been achieved by the agency of Baird, appears a striking act of retributive providence. He who was to lead on that resistless soldiery, by whose bayonets the life and throne of Tippoo should be extinguished, had pined in hopeless captivity, the tenant of a dungeon, in that capital which he was to enter in a few hours a conqueror. In the melancholy slaughter of Colonel Bailey and his troops by Hyder Aly, on the 10th of September 1780,* Baird, then a captain, was desperately wounded, made prisoner, hurried to Seringapatam, and there subjected to treatment that, even at a period remote from the event, cannot be heard without producing in the listener a thrill of horror and disgust. Of the many who shared his captivity, few remained to narrate their sufferings. Disease, starvation, poison, and the bowstring, ended their miserable lives: but a providential ordinance willed it that Baird should survive—and, after disease failed to rob him of life, or temptation† deprive him of his honour, he was destined to lead that band to vengeance, by

* "Details," &c.

† "During this period, Hyder sent some of his principal officers to induce the English to enter his service. He offered them three times as much pay as they received in our army, and as many horses, palanquins, and *wives*, as they chose."—*Life of Sir David Baird.*

whom a tyrant was exterminated, and the power of Mysore prostrated to the dust!

The arrangements for the assault were completed on the evening of the 3rd—and two thousand five hundred Europeans, and one thousand nine hundred native troops, selected to carry it into execution. After sunset, ladders, fascines, &c. were conveyed into the trenches unnoticed by the enemy; and before daybreak, the storming parties, evading the observation of the garrison, marched quietly in, and lay down until the order to assault was given.

One o'clock came — the city at that hour was perfectly quiet, — the trenches to all appearance containing nothing but their ordinary guards. This tranquillity was suddenly interrupted. Baird appeared, and ordered the assault, and that word, "Forward!" annihilated an empire, and changed a dynasty over an immense territory, with a population almost countless, an army of three hundred thousand, and a revenue of five millions sterling.

The forlorn hope rushed on, followed closely by the columns under Dunlop and Sherbroke. They plunged into the river under a tremendous fire of rockets and musketry. The ford across the Cauvery had been staked the preceding night, to mark the passage the troops should take; but, in the hurry, they swerved to the right, and getting into deeper water, the progress of the

column was retarded. Baird, observing the difficulty, rushed on close to the forlorn hope,—cheered the men forward,—and in six minutes the British colours were flying above the breach!

Filing off right and left, the storming parties pressed on. The north-west bastion was carried; all went prosperously,—although the discovery of an inner ditch, filled with water, was at first alarming. But the scaffolding used by Tippoo's workmen, and most fortunately left there undisturbed, enabled the British to surmount every obstacle, and enter the body of the place.

The right column halted on the east cavalier, to give the men breathing-time, after violent exertion under a burning sun. They awaited there a reinforcement of fresh troops, to proceed and assail the palace, where it was believed Tippoo had retired. The report was untrue,—that palace he was fated never to revisit,—the tyrant of Mysore was, at the time, a mangled corpse.

The left column had overcome every opposition, and continued their course along the ramparts, as directed in the general order for the assault. Part of the 12th regiment, however, either mistaking or disobeying orders, rushed into the body of the town, and finding the sally-port crowded with the Sultaun's troops, commenced firing from the inside on the archway; while the remainder of their own column were

keeping up a sharp fusilade upon it from the other side. No wonder, thus enfiladed, that the passage was soon choked with dead;—and it was afterwards ascertained, on the removal of the bodies, that above three hundred of the soldiers of Mysore had fallen in this narrow space.

It is said, that to the moment of the assault, Tippoo never supposed that an attempt would be made to storm the fortress; and when the marching of the columns to the breach was reported, he received the intelligence with incredulity. The increasing uproar undeceived him,—and rising from table, where dinner had been laid under a thatched shed on the northern face of the works, he performed his ablutions coolly, and called for his horse and arms.* At that moment the death of his best officer was announced. The Sultaun paid a tribute to the bravery of his favourite, named his successor, and rode forth never to return.

On the left Tippoo commanded in person; and here the traverses, erected to protect the breach, were so furiously defended, that the assailants were completely checked. The Sultaun fought among his meanest soldiers, and, if his attendants

* He ordered his personal servants to load the carbines which they carried for his own use, and hastened along the ramparts towards the breach. He repeatedly fired; and one of his servants saw him bring down several Europeans near the top of the breach.

can be trusted, several of the most daring of the assailants were shot by the prince himself. Fortunately for the British, by some unaccountable neglect, a passage from the ditch to the rampart, by which the Sultaun's working parties passed from one place to the other, had been forgotten. By this way the 12th regiment reached the rampart, and pressing quickly forward, turned the traverses, and poured in a flanking fire that rendered them untenable. The troops that had held them hitherto were now obliged to retire; the posts were abandoned, and the Sultaun joined reluctantly his retreating soldiery.*

Fatigued, suffering from the intense heat, and pained by an old wound, Tippoo mounted his horse, and retired slowly along the northern rampart. The British were momentarily gaining ground, the garrison in every direction flying, while a spattering fusilade, and occasionally a wild huzza, told that the victors were everywhere advancing. Instead of quitting the city, as he might have done, the Sultaun crossed the bridge over the inner ditch and entered the town. The covered gateway was now crowded with fugitives vainly endeavouring to escape

* A number of the garrison escaped by uniting their turbans, and lowering themselves from the bastions. This precarious means of escape occasionally failed, and many were found at the base of the walls, maimed or killed from the attempt.

from the bayonets of their conquerors, who were heard approaching at either side. A random shot struck the Sultaun: he pressed his horse forward, but his passage was impeded by a mob of runaways, who literally choked the gloomy arch. Presently a cross fire opened, and filled the passage with the dead and wounded. Tippoo's horse was killed, but his followers managed to disengage him, dragged him exhausted from beneath the fallen steed, and placed him in his palanquin. But escape was impossible; the British were already in the gateway,—the bayonet was unsparingly at work, for quarter at this moment was neither given nor expected. Dazzled by the glittering of his jewelled turban, a soldier dashed forward and caught the Sultaun's sword-belt. With failing strength Tippoo cut boldly at his assailant, and inflicted a trifling wound. The soldier, irritated by pain, drew back, laid his musket to his shoulder, and shot the Sultaun dead. His companions, perceiving the struggle, rushed up; the palanquin was overturned, the bearers cut down, the body of the departed tyrant thrown upon a heap of dead and dying, and the corpse, despoiled of everything valuable, left among the fallen Mussulmans—naked, unknown, and unregarded.

The capital of Mysore was now at the mercy of the conquerors, and the General's first care was to seek out the dishonoured body of its once

haughty master. As it was suspected that Tippoo had fallen in the northern gateway, the bodies that lay heaped within it were hastily removed. For a time the search was unsuccessful, and torches were obtained, as the archway was low and gloomy. At last, beneath a heap of slain Mussulmans, their ruler's body was discovered. The heat had not yet left the corpse; and though despoiled of sword and belt, sash and turban,* the well-known talisman that encircled his right arm was soon recognised by the conquerors. The amulet, formed of some metallic substance of silvery hue, was surrounded by magic scrolls in Arabic and Persian characters, and sewed carefully in several pieces of richly-flowered silk. The eyes were unclosed; the countenance wearing that appearance of stern composure, that induced the lookers-on for a time to fancy that the proud spirit of the haughty Sultaun was still lingering in its tenement of clay.† The pulse was examined—its throbs were ended, and life was totally extinct.

* When the Sultaun left the palace he was dressed in a light-coloured jacket, wide trousers of fine flowered silk, a sash of dark-red silky stuff, and a turban with one or two distinguishing ornaments. He wore his sword in a rich belt slung over his shoulder, and a small cartridge-box hung to another embroidered belt thrown over his left shoulder; the talisman was fastened under his jacket on his right arm.

† It is a curious circumstance, that the expression of the features after death, when inspected on a field of battle, will

The body was directly removed to the palace, and there respectfully deposited until the necessary preparations for an honourable interment were completed. The funeral was conducted with all the ceremonies which Eastern forms require. As the procession moved slowly through the city, a "keeraut" of five thousand rupees was distributed to the fakirs, and verses from the Koran were repeated by the chief of the priests, and responded by the assistants. Minute guns were fired from the batteries; and a guard of honour, composed of European flank companies, followed the remains of the late ruler of Mysore to the sepulchre of his once haughty father.

Tippoo, notwithstanding his cruelty and despotism, was highly regarded by his Mussulman subjects. His was no common character,—brave, munificient, and a bigot to his faith, he was just the sovereign to excite Eastern admiration;—a rigid observer of the Prophet's ordinances, he attended strictly to the formulæ of his religion. Wine was strictly inhibited; and every unbeliever, not excepting his favourite employées, were treated with scorn and distrust. His establishment and household were formed on a scale of regal splendour; and when, by accident or age, their services were no longer efficient, Tippoo

generally tell the means by which life was extinguished. From sword and bayonet wounds, the features present a calm appearance; while those of persons who have perished by musketry or cannon shot, are always distorted and convulsed.

never permitted a servant to be discharged, although their numbers were incredible.

With all the sternness of character and high-souled energy for which the departed Sultaun was remarkable, it would appear that he was prone to superstition, and not endued with that blind reliance upon Providence which, among Mussulmans, distinguishes the true believer. It is said that the day doomed to be fatal to his empire and himself had been announced; and, forewarned of impending calamity, he vainly endeavoured to avert misfortune by resorting to magic ceremonies, and obtaining the interference of the Brahmins with their gods. Though a devoted follower of Mahomet, he offered these priests an oblation of money, buffaloes, an elephant, black she-goat, and dresses of cloth, beseeching them to use their influence with Heaven for his prosperity. A presentiment of coming danger had evidently cast its shadows before, and those immediately around the Sultaun's person* remarked that he was heavily depressed. Yet

* The ruler of Mysore was of low stature, corpulent, with high shoulders, and a short thick neck; but his feet and hands were remarkably small. His complexion was rather dark, his eyes large and prominent, with small arched eyebrows, and an aquiline nose. He had an appearance of dignity, or rather sternness, in his countenance, which distinguished him above the common order of his people. When examined after death he had four wounds, three in the body and one in the temple; the ball having entered a little above the right ear, and lodged in the cheek.—*Narrative by Major Allan.*

his confidence in the strength of the city and the *matériel* of its garrison was unbounded. He believed that Seringapatam was impregnable; and laughed to scorn the idea that the British would ever dream of carrying it by assault.

His funeral was marked by natural occurrences, that seemed in happy keeping with the obsequies of him who had left an empire for a tomb. On the evening when Tippoo was committed to his kindred dust, the sky became overcast, and a storm broke suddenly in a torrent of rain, while heaven seemed in a blaze,* and peal after peal of thunder appeared to shake the city to its very foundations, and added to the fearful uproar. A tempest of more violence was hardly recollected; it seemed as if an elemental convulsion had been decreed, to announce that the once haughty tyrant of Mysore was nothing now but dust and ashes.

The storming of Seringapatam was certainly a bold and hazardous attempt — it was nobly executed, and deserved the success it gained. The moment for action was happily selected. An Indian sun, when in meridian power, obliges man to avoid its exhausting influence, and hence that period of the day is habitually made in Hindoostan an hour of repose and sleep. Never supposing that at this season of relaxation any

* Two British officers, attached to the Bombay army, were killed in camp that evening by lightning.

attempt upon the fortress would be made, with the exception of the guards alone, the Sultaun's troops were sleeping in their respective barracks. Hence, when the alarm was given, a panic spread; and profiting by the confusion, the assailants increased it, and prevented any attempt being made for an efficient rally and defence.

To other circumstances, however, the fortunate result of the attack may in a great measure be attributed. By an unpardonable oversight the breach was unprovided with a retrenchment, and the workmen's passage between the ditch and rampart left undefended. Had the breach been properly retrenched, it could not have been surmounted in the face of such a garrison; and traverses, that could have been, and were, most obstinately defended, were lost to the besieged by their stupid neglect in having left a means of escalade from the ditch, which the labour of a dozen men would have made impracticable. How frequently in war do great results arise from trifling causes.

Every care was taken to prevent plunder and violence in the night. The inhabitants were assured of protection; and the Sultaun's children kindly received by General Baird, and for better security sent from the fortress to the camp. Even before Tippoo's death was ascertained, great delicacy was observed in searching the palace, where it was supposed he had con-

cealed himself. The zenana, which contained his women, was scrupulously respected—and a guard was merely drawn around it to prevent the Sultaun's escape, in the event of his having made that his place of refuge.

Though eight thousand of Tippoo's garrison fell in the assault, very few of the inhabitants suffered. The British loss during the siege and storm was, of course, severe; twenty-five officers were killed or wounded in the assault; and the total casualties were, of Europeans, twenty-two officers killed, forty-five wounded, eighty-one rank and file killed, six hundred and twenty-two wounded, and twenty-two missing; of the native army, one hundred and nineteen were killed, four hundred and twenty wounded, and one hundred missing, making a general total, of one thousand five hundred and thirty-one *hors de combat.*

Having made necessary arrangements for the protection of the town, Baird marched the 33rd and 74th regiments to the palace, and in one of its magnificent courts the soldiers piled arms, and established their bivouac.* Sentries were

* Sleep after a battle is most welcome; but Baird and his staff were speedily disturbed, and it was communicated to the General that the city was on fire, and outrages were being committed, which he took immediate means to remedy. Having again composed himself to rest, a new alarm disturbed him. "The treasury of Tippoo had been forced, and the soldiers were actually loading themselves with gold."

It was true. The door generally used was securely guarded;

placed around the zenana for its security; and the General slept on a carpet spread for his accommodation under the verandah. There lay the conqueror of Seringapatam, surrounded by his victorious soldiers, and dispensing protection to the helpless family of the fallen Sultaun. There he lay, on whose breath hung life and death. Yet but a few years back, and within three hundred yards of the spot he rested on, that man had occupied a dungeon, dragging on a cheerless captivity, and waiting until the poisoned cup should be presented by "the bondsman of a slave," or the order delivered for his midnight murder.

Is not the romance of real life oftentimes wilder far than any creation of the imagination?

The tyrant of Mysore was gone to his account, and "how his audit stood none knew save Heaven;" but assuredly a more tiger-hearted monster never disgraced the musnud. His conduct to the European prisoners after Hyder's death was atrocious. Of those taken with Bailey, the greater proportion perished from starvation and disease; while Matthews and his officers, who had surrendered under the usual conditions

but another had been discovered, and by that the plunderers had obtained access to the treasure. Colonel Wallace found the place crowded with soldiers and *one officer*, all busily employed in pocketing gold and jewels. The individual who disgraced his rank is dead; and Baird, as it is supposed, out of respect to his family, kept his name a secret.

granted in honourable warfare, and guaranteed by Tippoo himself, were savagely murdered. Some of them were led out at night, taken to a retired spot, and hewn in pieces—while seventeen were poisoned with the milk of the cocoa-nut tree. The death of the unhappy General was probably the most horrible of all. Apprised by some means of the fate that was impending, he refused the food sent by the Keeladar, and obtained, from the compassion of the guard and servants, as much of theirs as merely sustained existence; the Havildar who had him in charge humanely conniving at the proceeding. But when Tippoo learned that his victim still lived, the Havildar was sent for, and it was intimated that if his prisoner should exist beyond a certain time, his own life should pay the penalty of his humanity. The wretched instrument of tyranny communicated what had passed to the devoted General, and gave him the alternative of death from poison or starvation. "For a few days the love of life maintained a struggle with the importunate calls of hunger. These, however, prevailed in the issue of the contest—he ate of the poisoned food, and drank too—whether to quench the rage of inflamed thirst, or to drown the torments of his soul in utter insensibility—of the poisoned cup; and in six hours after the fatal repast was found dead."

The last acts of Tippoo's life were in fit keeping with a career marked throughout by perfidy and bloodshed. In the confusion of the night of the 5th, when Colonel Wellesley's attack on Sultaunpet failed from darkness and the intricacy of the betel tope, twelve grenadiers of the 33rd were made prisoners, and brought into Seringapatam. At midnight they were murdered by threes—"the mode of killing them was by twisting their heads, while their bodies were held fast, and thus breaking their necks."* The fact was ascertained beyond doubt, for a peon pointed out the place where these ill-fated soldiers were interred, and they were examined and identified by their own officers. Other English soldiers who had been taken in assaulting outposts during the siege, had also been put to death, "having nails driven through their skulls."†

In alluding to the Sultaun's death, the spirited biographer of Sir David Baird says, "One cannot but regret, for the honour of human nature, and even for the sake of England, the end of such a man as Tippoo, shot in cold blood by a man endeavouring to rob him. Let us hope the man was a sepoy." The man was an Irish soldier, who many years afterwards stated the fact in confession, and when '*in articulo mortis.*' "Cold

* Official statement of Captain Macleod.

† Baird's despatch to Harris.

blood!" Could blood be cold during the storm of a defended city, and under an Indian sun almost at noon?

The tyrant only met the doom he merited. For his talents we give him credit—his courage obtains our admiration—his munificence we admit —but for the murderer of the brave, we feel neither sympathy nor regret.

ASSAYE.

Effect of Tippoo's death upon the Native Princes.—Dhoondia's rise and fall.—War between Scindia and Holkar;—Their differences accommodated.—Hostilities commence again.—Operations.—Camp at Assaye.—Battle.—Death of Colonel Maxwell.—Results of the victory at Assaye.—Honours conferred on General Wellesley.—He returns to England.

THE death of Tippoo Saib, and the fall of Seringapatam, were astounding tidings for the native chiefs. Their delusory notions regarding their individual importance were ended—and a striking proof had been given, of what little reliance could be placed on Indian mercenaries and places of strength, when England went forth in wrath, and sent her armies to the field.

As the fear of Britain increased, so did the hatred of the native princes to everything connected with her name. A power that had proved herself so formidable was to be dreaded, fixed as she was in the very heart of India; and, as the difficulty increased, so did the desire of freeing themselves from that thrall, which daily appeared to press upon them more heavily.

With political history we have no business,

farther than regards the military operations we detail; but, as warfare originates in state policy, the elucidation of the one, will occasionally require that brief allusions should be made to the other.

Among the prisoners delivered by the British from their dungeons after the reduction of the capital of Mysore, was a Mahratta trooper, who had commenced his predatory career in the cavalry of Hyder Aly, and, after his death, continued in the service of his son. For some cause he deserted, headed a band of marauders, was enticed back by the false promises of Tippoo, flung into a dungeon, and there made a Mussulman, greatly against his own will, and much to the glory of the Prophet. "No sooner were his fetters off, than his feet were again in the stirrup; and many of Tippoo's horsemen, men of desperate fortunes, without a country, a service, or a master, became his willing followers." His predatory band became so numerous that he overrun the district of Biddenore, and at last became so formidable, that a strong British force was sent to crush him and his robber horde. It was effected — six hundred and fifty of his followers were cut to pieces, and himself driven across the Toombudra into the country of the Peishwah. But here he was not permitted to rest. Ghokla surprised him, and routed him totally, taking his cannon, elephants, tents, and baggage. With difficulty the freebooter escaped, fled none knew

where, and in a short time, Dhoondia was almost forgotten.

Suddenly, however, the daring freebooter appeared again; and moving south at the head of five thousand horse, threatened the frontier of the Mysore, and naturally occasioned immense alarm over a country so open to his predatory visits. No time was lost in despatching a sufficient force to crush him altogether, or compel him to retire, and Colonel Wellesley was intrusted with the command. Another force was directed to co-operate with that of the Colonel; but fearing the marauder would escape unless promptly encountered, Wellesley pushed on alone, and by forced marches succeeded in coming up, while Dhoondia was encamped, as he imagined, in perfect security. The fellow, naturally daring, took up a strong position, and boldly waited for the British assault. Colonel Wellesley led the charge. It was admirably made, and decided the marauder's fate. His cavalry were cut to pieces or dispersed, Dhoondia himself sabred, and his body, secured upon a gun, was brought in triumph to the camp. Thus perished the king of "the two worlds,"—for such was the unassuming title by which the freebooter was pleased to have himself designated by his banditti.

An expedition against Batavia, in which Colonel Wellesley was promised a command, was for some reasons abandoned. Baird, with a

division, was despatched to Egypt by the desert rout; and Wellesley reappointed to the government of the Mysore.

Affairs again began to assume a threatening look. The Mahratta chiefs exhibited an unfriendly attitude; and to cement an alliance with the Peishwah, and thus tranquillize the country, a portion of Tippoo's territory was offered and rejected. Scindia, with his army, was at Poona, and his influence directed every act of that dependent court.

A misunderstanding between Scindia and Holkar brought on a war between those chiefs. Holkar advanced on Poona, compelling Scindia to a battle, in which he was defeated. The Peishwah deserted his ally in the hour of need, and concluded a treaty with the British. To effectuate this, Wellesley, now a Major-general, took the field, with orders to drive Holkar from Poona, and secure the Peishwah's return to his capital. Learning that the Mahrattas intended to plunder Poona, the General saved it by an extraordinary forced march, accomplishing sixty miles in thirty hours—a marvellous exertion indeed to make under an Indian sun.

All for a short time was quiet; but those restless chiefs again assumed a hostile position. Scindia and the Rajah of Berar moved towards the Nizam's frontier; while the former was negotiating with Holkar, his late enemy, to arrange

their differences, and make common cause against the English.

To prepare for the threatened attack, the Marquis Wellesley invested the officers commanding the armies of Hindoostan and the Deccan with full powers; and to General Wellesley a special authority was given to make peace, or commence hostilities, as his own judgment should determine. In accordance with this power, a demand was made on Scindia that he should separate from the Rajah of Berar, and re-cross the Nerbuddah. To this demand an evasive reply was returned, and Eastern cunning was employed to obtain such delay as should permit the chieftain's plans to be matured, and enable them to take the field in force. This shuffling policy was, however, quite apparent; and on the first information that his political agent had quitted Scindia's camp, Wellesley suddenly broke up his cantonments, and marched directly on Ahmednuggur.

This ancient town was defended in the Eastern fashion with a high wall, flanked at its bends and angles by a tower, and garrisoned by some of Scindia's infantry and an auxiliary force of Arabs, while a body of the chieftain's cavalry occupied the space between the pettah and the fort. Wellesley, without delay, assaulted the town, and carried it by escalade. On the 10th, the British cannon opened on the fort. The

Keeladar in command proposed terms, and the English General expressed a readiness to listen to his propositions, but the gun continued working. Indian diplomacy has no chance when batteries are open; and, on the 12th, a garrison of fourteen hundred marched out, and the place was delivered up. This fortress, from its locality, was valuable; it secured the communications with Poona, made a safe depôt for military stores, and was centrically placed in a district whose revenue was above 600,000 rupees.

With a short delay, Wellesley moved on Aurungabad, and entered that splendid city on the 29th. The enemy moved in a south-easterly direction, threatening Hyderabad—while the British, marching by the left bank of the Godaverey, secured their convoys from Moodgul, and obliged Scindia to retire northwards. As yet the Mahratta chiefs were moving a cavalry force north, with but a few match-lock men; but they were joined now by their whole artillery, and sixteen battalions of infantry, officered chiefly by Frenchmen.

On the 21st, at a conference at Budnapoor, General Wellesley and Colonel Stevenson arranged a combined attack for the 24th. They were to move east and west, pass the defiles on the same day, and thus prevent any movement of the enemy southward. A mistake, in distance, brought General Wellesley much sooner to his

halting place than had been calculated; and learning that the Mahratta army were already breaking up to retire, he sent orders to Colonel Stevenson to advance; and announcing his immediate march on Scindia, begged his colleague to hurry forward to his assistance.

The cavalry consisted of the 19th Light Dragoons, and three native regiments, under the command of Colonel Maxwell, a bold and skilful officer. General Wellesley accompanied the horse, the infantry following in light marching order. After passing a league and half of ground, the advance reached an eminence; and on the right, and covering an immense extent of country, the Mahratta army appeared.

In brilliant sunshine, nothing could be more picturesque than Scindia's encampment. The varied colours of the tents, each disposed around its own chieftain's banner without order or regularity, with "streets crossing and winding in every direction, displayed a variety of merchandize, as in a great fair. Jewellers, smiths, and mechanics were all attending as minutely to their occupations, and all as busily employed, as if they were at Poona, and in peace."*

In this enormous camp fifty thousand men were collected. The river Kaitna was running in their front—the Suah in their rear. These

* Dirom's Campaign.

rivers united their waters at some distance beyond the left of the camp, forming a flat peninsula of considerable extent. The native infantry and all the guns were in position on the left, retired upon the Suah, and appuied on the village of Assaye. The cavalry were entirely on the right. The position was naturally strong; for the banks of the Kaitna are steep and broken, and the front very difficult to attack.

As the British cavalry formed line on the heights, it presented a strange but glorious contrast to the countless multitude of Mahratta horsemen, who were seen in endless array below. The English brigade, scarcely numbering three thousand sabres, took its position with all the boldness of a body having an equal force opposed. In number Scindia's cavalry were fully ten to one; as it was ascertained that, with his allies, his horsemen actually on the field exceeded thirty thousand. Having made a careful reconnaissance, General Wellesley determined to attack, and, when the infantry came up, it was instantly executed.

While examining the position, immense masses of Scindia's cavalry moved forward, and threw out skirmishers, which were directly driven in. Wellesley having discovered a neglected ford, decided on crossing over, and, by attacking the infantry and guns, embarrass the immense cavalry force of Scindia, and oblige it to manœu-

vre to disadvantage, and act on the confined space the ill-selected ground afforded.

The infantry had now come up, and, in column, they were directed on the river. A fire from the Mahratta guns immediately opened, but the range was far too distant to permit the cannonade to be effective, or check the forward movement of the columns. The whole were now across the river; the infantry formed into two brigades, and the cavalry in reserve behind them, ready to rush on any part of the battle ground where advantage could be gained, or support should be required. The Mysore horse and the contingent of the Peishwah were merely left in observation of the enemy's right.

This flank attack obliged Scindia to change his front. He did so with less confusion than was expected; and by his new disposition rested his right upon the Kaitna, and his left upon the Suah and Assaye. His whole front bristled with cannon—and the ground immediately around the village seemed, from the number of guns, like one great battery.

The fire from this powerful artillery was of course destructive; and the British guns were completely overpowered, and in a very few minutes silenced entirely. This was the crisis; on the determination of a moment hung the fortune of a very doubtful day. Without hesitation Wellesley abandoned his guns, and advanced

with the bayonet. The charge was gallantly made, the enemy's right forced back, and his guns captured.

While this movement was being executed, the 74th and light infantry pickets in front of Assaye were severely cut up by the fire from the place. Perceiving the murderous effect of the fusilade, a strong body of the Mahratta horse moved swiftly round the village, and made a furious onset on the 74th. Maxwell had watched the progress of the battle, and now was his moment of action. The word was given, — the British cavalry charged home. Down went the Mahrattas in hundreds, beneath the fiery assault of the brave 19th, and their gallant supporters the sepoys; while, unchecked by a tremendous storm of grape and musketry, Maxwell pressed his advantage, and cut through Scindia's left. The 74th and the light infantry re-formed, and, pushing boldly on, completed the disorder of the enemy, and prevented any effective attempt to renew a battle, the doubtful result of which was thus in a few minutes decided by the promptitude of the General.

Some of Scindia's troops fought bravely. The desperate obstinacy with which his gunners stood to the cannon, was almost incredible. They remained to the last—and were bayoneted around the guns, which they refused, even in certain defeat, to abandon.

The British charge was resistless; but in the enthusiasm of success, at times there is a lack of prudence. The sepoys rushed wildly on—their elated ardour was uncontrollable—while a mass of the Mahratta horse were arrayed on the hill, ready to rush upon ranks disordered by their own success.

But Wellesley foresaw, and guarded against the evil consequences that a too excited courage might produce. The 78th were kept in hand; and cool, steady, and with a perfect formation, they offered an imposing front, that the Mahratta cavalry perceived was unassailable.

A strong column of the enemy, that had been only partially engaged, now rallied and renewed the battle, joined by a number of Scindia's gunners and infantry, who had flung themselves as dead upon the ground, and thus escaped the sabres of the British cavalry. Maxwell's brigade, who had re-formed their ranks and breathed their horses, dashed into the still disordered ranks of these half-rallied troops—a desperate slaughter ensued, the Mahrattas were totally routed; but the British lost their chivalrous leader—and in the moment of victory Maxwell died in front of the battle, "and, fighting foremost, fell."

The last effort of the day was made by a part of the artillery who were in position near the village of Assaye. In person Wellesley led on the 78th Highlanders and the 7th native cavalry.

In the attack the General's horse was killed under him; but the enemy declined the charge, broke, fled, and left a field cumbered with their dead, and crowded with cannon, bullocks, caissons, and all the *matériel* of an Eastern army, to the conquerors.

The evening had fallen before the last struggle at Assaye was over. The British victory was complete. Twelve hundred of Scindia's dead were found upon the field; while, of his wounded, scarcely an estimate could be hazarded, for all the villages and adjacent country were crowded with his disabled soldiery. The British loss was of necessity severe, and might be estimated at one third of the entire army, being rendered "hors de combat."

To call Assaye a brilliant victory, is only using a term simply descriptive of what it was. It was a magnificent display of skill, moral courage, and perfect discipline, against native bravery and an immense numerical superiority. But it was not a mass of men, rudely collected, ignorant of military tactics, and unused to combinations, that Wellesley overthrew. Scindia's army was respectable in every arm, his cavalry excellent of their kind, and his artillery well served. His infantry were for a long time under the training of French officers; and the ease and precision with which he changed his front when the British crossed the Kaitna to throw themselves on

his flank, showed that the lessons of the French disciplinarians had not been given in vain.

The total *déroute* of Assaye was followed by a tide of conquest. Fortress after fortress was reduced, and Scindia sought and obtained a truce. The British arms were turned against the Rajah of Berar. The General marched against him—for the truce was ended suddenly, and Scindia joined his colleague with all his disposable force.

On the plains of Argaune Wellesley found the confederated chiefs drawn up in order of battle. Scindia's immense cavalry formed the right—on the left were the Berar infantry and guns, flanked by the Rajah's cavalry—while a cloud of Pindaries were observed on the extreme right of the whole array.

The British moved down and formed line, the infantry in front, and the cavalry in reserve. The battle was short and decisive. The Berar's Persian infantry attacked the 74th and 78th regiments, and were literally annihilated; while Scindia's cavalry charge failed totally, the 26th native regiment repulsing it most gloriously. The British now rushed forward. The Mahrattas broke and fled in every direction, abandoning their entire park;* while the cavalry pursued by moonlight the scattered host, and captured an immense number of elephants and beasts of bur-

* Above one hundred pieces of artillery were taken at Assaye, and thirty-eight were captured at Argaune.

den, the entire baggage, and stores and arms of every description.

The fall of some places of strength, and the total defeat of their armies in the field, humbled Scindia and his ally, the Rajah, and obliged them to sue and obtain a peace. The brilliant career of General Wellesley had gained him a name in arms, which future victories were to immortalize. To commemorate the battle of Assaye, a monument was erected in Calcutta, a sword presented to the victor by the citizens, and a gold vase by the officers he commanded. He was made a Knight Companion of the Bath, and honoured by the thanks of Parliament. Even from the inhabitants of Seringapatam he received an address, remarkable for its simplicity and affection, committing him to the care of "the God of all castes," and invoking for him "health, glory, and happiness." In 1805 he returned to his native land, "with war's red honours on his crest," bearing with him from the scene of his glory the high estimation and affectionate wishes of every caste and colour.

EGYPTIAN EXPEDITION.

British army employed in useless expeditions. — Finally ordered to Egypt. — Voyage thither. — Arrival in the Bay of Aboukir. — Preparations for disembarkation. — Landing. — Attack and repulse of the French. — Sir Ralph Abercrombie advances — forces the French position — attempts the lines in front of Alexandria by a *coup-de-main*, and is repulsed.—Falls back, and takes up a position.

WHETHER the employment of a British force in Egypt, under the circumstances Europe then presented, was a judicious disposal of it, is a question that would involve too large a political inquiry; "but certain it is that any positive object would have been preferable to the indeterminate counsels and feebly executed plans which wasted the soldiers' health and spirits, compromised the honour of the army, and so materially prejudiced the interests of a country."*

In 1800, an attempt on Cadiz was planned and abandoned; and an army, the "corps elit" of Britain, was kept idly afloat in transports, at an enormous expense, suffering from tempestuous weather, and losing their energies and discipline,

* Wilson.

while one scheme was proposed after another, only to be considered and rejected. Italy and South America were named as countries where they might be successfully employed. To both designs, however, on mature deliberation, strong objections were found: and on the 25th of October final orders were received from England, directing the fleet and army forthwith to rendezvous at Malta, and thence proceed to Egypt.

The troops on reaching the island were partially disembarked, while the ships were refitting; and the fresh provisions and salubrious air of Valetta soon restored many who had suffered from long confinement and salt rations. Five hundred Maltese were enlisted to serve as pioneers. Water casks were replenished, stores laid in, the troops re-embarked; and on the 20th of December, the first division got under weigh, followed by the second on the succeeding day.

Instead of sailing direct for their destination, the fleet proceeded to the Bay of Macri. Finding that roadstead too open, the Admiral shaped his course for the coast of Caramania. There he was overtaken by a gale of wind,—and though close to the magnificent harbour of Marmorrice, its existence appears to have been known, out of a fleet of two hundred vessels, only to the captain of a brig of war. As the fleet were caught in a heavy gale on a lee shore, the result

might have been most disastrous to the transports, who could not carry sufficient canvass to work off the land. Fortunately, Marmorrice proved a haven of refuge; and the surprise and pleasure of the soldiers can scarcely be described, when they found themselves in smooth water, and surrounded by the grandest scenery imaginable, "though, the instant before, the fleet was labouring in a heavy gale, and rolling in a tremendous sea."*

Another landing of the troops took place, and no advantages resulted from it to compensate the loss of time, which allowed the French to obtain strong reinforcements. Goat's flesh was abundant, and poultry plentiful; but the Turks had probably been apprised beforehand of the munificence of the English, as every article was advanced on the arrival of the fleet four hundred per cent. in price.

The remount of the cavalry formed an ostensible, almost an only reason, for the expedition visiting Asia Minor, and consuming time that might have been so successfully employed. The horses arrived, but from their wretched quality

* "It may be a question why the army did not sail direct to Egypt, and the event justifies the supposition that it would have experienced less resistance, since L'Egyptienne, Justice, Régénéru, and Lodi, which carried out important succours of troops and ammunition, had not at that time escaped into Alexandria."—*Wilson's Expedition to Egypt.*

and condition they proved a sorry equivalent for the expense and trouble their acquisition cost.*

While the expedition were in the harbour of Marmorrice, an awful tempest came suddenly on, and raged with unintermitting fury for two days. It thundered violently—hailstones fell as large as walnuts — deluges of water rushed from the mountains, sweeping everything away. The horses broke loose, the ships drove from their anchors; the Swiftsure, a seventy-four, was struck with lightning, and many others lost masts, spars, and were otherwise disabled. Amid this elemental war, signal guns fired from vessels in distress, and the howling of wolves and other wild animals in the woods, added to the uproar.

After a protracted delay in waiting for the Turkish armament, that was expected to have been in perfect readiness, the expedition left the harbour without it on the 23rd of February. The sight, when the fleet got under weigh, was most imposing; the men-of-war, transports, and store-

* "The animals were naturally bad, and in such a shocking state as to make the dragoons feel humiliation in being ordered to take charge of them. Every commanding officer solicited rather to serve with his corps as infantry; but the nature of the service the army was about to be employed on, rendered even such more desirable than none. Out of several hundred horses, two hundred were left for the cavalry, fifty for the artillery, and the remainder *shot, or sold for a dollar a-piece.*"—*Wilson's Expedition.*

ships amounting to one hundred and seventy-five sail.

The British army was composed of the whole or portions of twenty-seven regiments, exclusive of artillery and pioneers.* Its total strength in rank and file, including one thousand sick and five hundred Maltese, was fifteen thousand three hundred and thirty men. In this number all the *attaches* of the army were reckoned, and consequently the entire force that could have been combatant in the field, would not exceed twelve thousand bayonets and sabres. This was certainly a small army with which to attack an enemy in possession of the country, holding fortified posts, with a powerful artillery, a numerous cavalry, and a perfect acquaintance with the only places on the coast where it was practicable to disembark in safety.

On the 1st of March the Arab's tower was in sight,—and next morning the whole fleet entered Aboukir Bay.† On the following morning a French frigate was seen running into Alexandria, having entered the bay in company with the British fleet.‡

* "Details," &c.

† The men-of-war brought up exactly in the place where the battle of the Nile was fought, the Foudroyant chafing her cables on the wreck of the French Admiral's ship. The anchor of the L'Orient was crept for and recovered.

‡ "Details," &c.

The weather was unfavourable for attempting a landing of the troops. This was a serious disappointment, and an accidental occurrence added to the inconvenience it would have otherwise caused. Two engineer officers, engaged in reconnoitring the coast, advanced too far into the bay, through an over-zealous anxiety to mark out a landing-place. They were seen and overtaken by a French gun-boat, who fired into the cutter, killing one of the engineers and making the other prisoner. The survivor was brought ashore, and forwarded to Cairo to General Menou; and thus, had the British descent been before doubtful, this unfortunate discovery would have confirmed the certainty of an intended landing, and allowed ample time for preparations being made to oppose it.

The weather moderated in the morning of the 7th, and the signal was made by the flag-ship "to prepare for landing." But the sea was still so much up, that the attempt was postponed,—and with the exception of an affair between the boats of the Foudroyant and a party of the enemy, whom they drove from a block-house, that day passed quietly over.

The 8th was more moderate; the swell had abated, and preparations for the landing commenced. At two o'clock the first division were in the boats, amounting to five thousand five hundred men, under General Coote; while the

ships, on board of which the remainder of the army still remained, were anchored as near the shore as possible, to allow the landing brigades their immediate support. The right and left flanks of the boats were protected by launches and gun-brigs; three sloops-of-war, with springs upon their cables, had laid their broadsides towards the beach; and the Fury and Tartarus had taken a position, to cover the troops with the fire of their mortars.

The French were drawn up on a ridge of sand-hills, with an elevated hillock in their centre, and twelve pieces of artillery in position along their line. The moment was one of absorbing interest — many a heart beat fast as, in half-companies, the soldiers stood under arms in the launches, impatiently awaiting the signal to advance.

A gun was fired; off sprang the boats, while the men-of-war opened their batteries, and the bomb-vessels commenced throwing shells. The cannonade from the shipping was promptly returned by the French lines and Castle of Aboukir; while on swept the regiments towards the beach, under a furious discharge of shot and shells, and a torrent of grape and musketry, that ploughed the surface of the water,* or carried death into

* "A bullet which grazes four or five times, as it does on water, will be much more likely to do execution than a direct shot; which may either strike short of the mark, and in the

the dense masses of men crowded in the launches. But nothing could exceed the glorious rivalry displayed by both services in advancing: while shot was hailing on the water, the sailors, as the spray flashed from their oar blades, nobly emulated each other in trying who should first beach his boat. Each cheered the other forward,—while the soldiers caught the enthusiastic spirit and answered them with loud huzzas. The beach was gained,—the 23rd and 40th jumped into the surf, reached the shore, formed as they cleared the water, and rushed boldly up the sandhills, never attempting to draw a trigger, but leaving all to be decided by the bayonet. The French regiments that confronted them were driven from the heights: while pressing on, the Nole hills in the rear, with three pieces of artillery, were captured.

The 42nd were equally successful; they formed with beautiful regularity—and in the face of a French battalion protected by two guns, and after defeating a charge of two hundred cavalry, they stormed and occupied the heights.

While these brilliant attacks had been in progress, the Guards were charged by the French dragoons in the very act of landing, and a temporary disorder ensued. The 58th had formed on the right, and, by a well-directed fire, repulsed

next bound pass far beyond it, or go over without touching at all."—*Carnot.*

the cavalry with loss. The Guards corrected their line, and instantly showed front—while the French, unable to shake the formation of the British, retired behind the sandhills.

The transport boats had been outstripped by those of the men-of-war, and consequently the Royals and 54th only touched the shore as the dragoons rode off. Their landing was, however, admirably timed; for a French column, under cover of the sandhills, was advancing with fixed bayonets on the left flank of the Guards. On perceiving these newly-landed regiments, its courage failed; it halted, delivered a volley, and then hastily retreated.

The British had now possession of the heights; the brigade of Guards was formed and advancing, and the boats returning to the ships for the remainder of the army. Observing this, the enemy abandoned their position on the ridge, and, retiring behind the sandhills in the rear, for some time kept up a scattered fire. But on the British moving forward they deserted the ground entirely, leaving three hundred killed and wounded, eight pieces of cannon, and a number of horses to the victors. The remainder of the brigades were safely disembarked, Sir Ralph Abercrombie landed, and a position taken up, the right upon the sea, and the left on Lake Maadie.

A landing in the face of an enemy, prepared, and in position, like the French, under a heavy

cannonade, and effected on a dangerous beach, would naturally occasion a severe loss of life; and several promising officers, and nearly five hundred men, were killed, wounded, and missing. The only surprise is that the casualties were not greater. The mode in which an army is debarked exposes it unavoidably to fire. Troops packed by fifties in a launch, afford a striking mark for an artillerist. Guns, already in position on the shore, enable those who work them to obtain the range of an approaching object with great precision; and the effect of a well-directed shot upon a boat crowded with troops is fatal.*

After the army had been united, it advanced by slow marches, some trifling skirmishing daily occurring between the advanced posts. On the 12th, the British bivouac was at the town of Mandora, and on the 13th Sir Ralph moved forward to attack the enemy, who were posted on a ridge of heights.

The French, reinforced by two half brigades of infantry, a regiment of cavalry from Cairo, and

* There exists, in fact, but little or no difference between the force of shot fired from a practicable elevation and that fired from a field-piece on a dead level. It is well known to military men, that artillery, firing from an elevated situation on bodies of troops, is less destructive, than when firing on nearly the same level. In the former case the shot can hardly hit more than one or two men; whereas it has been ascertained, that one single horizontal or *rezant* shot has killed *forty-two* when formed in close column.

a corps from Rosetta, mustered about five thousand five hundred, with five hundred horse, and five-and-twenty pieces of artillery. Their position was well chosen, as it stood on a bold eminence, having an extensive glacis in its front, that would allow a full sweep for the fire of its numerous and well-appointed artillery. The English attack was directed against the right wing,—and in two lines the brigades advanced in columns of regiments, the reserve covering the movements, and marching parallel with the first.

Immediately on debouching from a date wood, the enemy descended the heights: the 92nd, the leading regiment on the left, was attacked by a furious discharge of grape and musketry; while the French cavalry charged down the hill, and threw themselves upon the 90th, who led the right column. Though the charge was most gallantly made, Latour Maubourg leading the dragoons at a gallop, a close and withering volley from the 90th obliged them to turn along the front of the regiment, and retreat with a heavy loss: a few of the leading files actually reached the line, and were bayoneted in a desperate effort to break it. The attempt failed, and in executing his duty gloriously, their gallant leader was desperately wounded. The British pushed on the reserve, in column, on the right; the Guards, in rear, to support the centre, and Doyle's brigade, in column, behind the left. The French were on

every point forced from their position—and covered by the fire of their numerous guns, and the fusilade of their voltigeurs, they retreated across the plain, and occupied their own lines on the heights of Alexandria.

Dillon's regiment, during this movement, made a brilliant bayonet charge, captured two guns, and turned them instantly on the enemy. Wishing to follow up this success, Sir Ralph attempted to carry the position by a *coup de main;* and advancing across the plain, he directed the brigades of Moore and Hutchinson to assault the flanks of the French position simultaneously. To attempt dislodging a force, posted as the enemy were, could only end in certain discomfiture. The troops could make no way*—a murderous fire of artillery mowed them down — "the French, no longer in danger, had only to load and fire; aim was unnecessary; the bullets could not but do their office, and plunge into the lines." For several hours the English remained, suffering this exterminating fire patiently: and at sunset,

* "Whilst Sir Ralph Abercrombie *reconnoitred,* the army continued under the most terrible and destructive fire from the enemy's guns to which troops were ever exposed." This is Sir Robert Wilson's statement. Surely, were it necessary to reconnoitre, the troops should have been sheltered from a fire, to which, without any possible object, they were uselessly exposed. The truth is, the Peninsular campaign first taught England the art of modern war, and made her army, at its termination, officers and men, the first in Europe.

the order being given to fall back, the army retired and took up a position for the night.*

The British loss, its strength considered, was immense. Eleven hundred men were killed and wounded,—while that of the enemy amounted barely to a third, with four field-pieces, which they were obliged to abandon.

A strong position was taken by Sir Ralph; the right reached the sea, resting on the ruins of a Roman palace, and projecting a quarter of a mile over heights in front. This promontory of sand-hills and ruins was some three hundred yards across, sloping gradually to a valley, which divided it from the hills which formed the rest of the lines. The extreme left appuied on two batteries—and Lake Maadie protected the rear. The whole, from sea to lake, extended about a mile. In front of the right, the ground was uneven; but that before the centre would admit cavalry to act. The whole space had once been a Roman colony—and, on its ruined site, a hard-fought day was now about to be decided.

* "Details," &c.

BATTLE OF ALEXANDRIA.

French position.—The English fortify their camp.—Occurrences.—Menou attacks the British lines.—Battle of the 21st.—The English commander wounded.—Casualties of both armies.—Remarks.—Death of Sir Ralph Abercrombie.

The French position was still stronger than the English lines, as it stretched along a ridge of lofty hills, extending from the sea on one side to the canal of Alexandria on the other. A tongue of land in the advance of their right, ran nearly for a mile parallel with the canal, and had obliged the British posts to be thrown considerably back, and thus obliqued their line. In a classic and military view, nothing could be more imposing than the ground on which Menou's army were encamped. In the centre stood Fort Cretin; on the left, Fort Caffarelli; Pompey's Pillar showed boldly on the right; Cleopatra's Needle on the left; while Alexandria appeared in the background, with its walls extending to the sea; and at the extremity of a long low neck of land, the ancient Pharos

was visible. Wherever the eye ranged, objects of no common interest met it: some of the "wonders of the world" were contiguous; and "the very ruins under foot were sacred from their antiquity."

The British army had little leisure, and probably as little inclination, to indulge in classic recollections. The men were busily engaged in fortifying the position, bringing up guns for the batteries, and collecting ammunition and stores. The magazines were inconveniently situated; and to roll weighty spirit casks through the deep sands was a most laborious task, and it principally devolved upon the seamen. The fuel was particularly bad, the billets being obtained from the date-tree, which it is almost impossible to ignite, and whose smoke when kindling, pains, by its pungency, the eyes of all within its influence. Water was abundant, but of indifferent quality;* and as Menou, with a most unjustifiable severity, inflicted death upon the Arabs who should be found bringing sheep to the camp, the price of fresh provisions was high, and the supply precarious.

On the 10th, an affair took place between an

* "The 13th regiment dug into an aqueduct of running fresh water, well-arched over, but the source or outlet of which was never ascertained. The Arabs themselves could give no information, and seemed lost in astonishment, when regarding this valuable discovery."—*Wilson.*

enemy's patrol and a detachment of British cavalry, under Colonel Archdale. It was a very gallant, but very imprudent encounter. A third of the men, and half the officers, were killed or taken. Another casualty occurred also, to the great regret of all. Colonel Brice, of the Guards, in going his rounds, was deceived by a mirage; and coming unexpectedly on an enemy's post, received a wound of which he died the third day, a prisoner.

Menou was reported to be advancing; and an Arab chief apprised Sir Sydney Smith, that the French intended an attack upon the British camp next morning. The information was discredited; but the result proved that it was authentic.

On the 21st of March, the army, at three o'clock, as usual, stood to their arms. For half an hour all was undisturbed. Suddenly a solitary musket was fired, a cannon shot succeeded it, and a spattering fusilade, broken momentarily with the heavier booming of a gun, announced that an attack was being made. The feebleness of the fire rendered it doubtful against what point the real effort of the French would be directed. All looked impatiently for daybreak, which, though faintly visible in the east, seemed to break more tardily the more its assistance was desired.

On the right, a noise was heard; all listened in breathless expectation; shouts and a discharge of musketry succeeded; the roar increased,

momentarily it became louder,—that indeed was the enemy in force—and there the British line was seriously assailed.

Favoured by broken ground, and covered by the haze of morning, the French had partially surprised the videts, attacked the pickets, and following them quickly, drove them back upon the line. One column advanced upon the ruin held by the 58th, their drums beating the *pas de charge*, and the officers cheering the men forward. Colonel Houston, who commanded the regiment, fearing lest his own pickets might have been retiring in front of the enemy's column, reserved his fire, until the glazed hats of the French were distinguishable in the doubtful light. The 58th lined a wall partly dilapidated, but which in some places afforded them an excellent breastwork; and the twilight allowed the French column to be only distinctly seen when within thirty yards of the post. As the regiment occupied detached portions of the wall, where its greater ruin exposed it to attack, an irregular but well-sustained fusilade was kept up, until the enemy's column, unable to bear the quick and well-directed musketry of the British, retired into a hollow for shelter. There they re-formed, and wheeling to the right endeavoured to turn the left of the redoubt, while another column marched against the battery occupied by the 28th. On the front attack the regiment opened a heavy fire—but part of the

enemy had gained the rear, and another body penetrated through the ruined wall. Thus assailed on every side, the 58th wheeled back two companies, who, after delivering three effective volleys, rushed forward with the bayonet. The 23rd now came to support the 58th, while the 42nd moved round the exterior of the ruins, cutting off the French retreat; and of the enemy, all who entered the redoubt were killed or taken.

The situation of the 28th and 58th was, for a time, as extraordinary as it was dangerous; at the same moment they were actually repelling three separate attacks, and were assailed simultaneously on their front, flanks, and rear!

The 42nd, in relieving the 28th, was exposed to a serious charge of French cavalry. Nearly unperceived, the dragoons wheeled suddenly round the left of the redoubt, and though the ground was full of holes, rode furiously over tents and baggage, and, charging *en masse*, completely overthrew the Highlanders. In this desperate emergency, the 42nd, with broken ranks, and in that unavoidable confusion which, when it occurs, renders cavalry so irresistible, fought furiously hand to hand, and opposed their bayonets fearlessly to the sabres of the French. The flank companies of the 40th immediately beside them, dared not, for a time, deliver their fire, the combatants were so intermingled in the *mêlée*. At this moment General Stuart brought up the

foreign brigade in beautiful order, and their heavy and well-sustained fusilade decided the fate of the day. "Nothing could withstand it, and the enemy fled or perished."

During this charge of cavalry, Sir Ralph Abercrombie, who had ridden to the right, on finding it seriously engaged, advanced to the ruins where the contest was raging, after having despatched his aid-de-camp* with orders to the more distant brigades. He was quite alone; and some French dragoons having penetrated to the spot, one, remarking that he was a superior officer, charged and overthrew the veteran commander. In an attempt to cut him down, the old man, nerved with a momentary strength, seized the uplifted sword, and wrested it from his assailant, while a Highland soldier transfixed the Frenchman with his bayonet. Unconscious that he was wounded in the thigh, Sir Ralph complained only of a pain in his breast, occasioned, as he supposed, by a blow from the pommel of the sword during his recent struggle with the dragoon. The first officer that came up was Sir Sydney Smith, who,

* A curious incident occurred immediately afterwards. An aid-de-camp of General Craddock, in carrying orders, had his horse killed, and begged permission of Sir Sydney Smith to mount a horse belonging to his orderly dragoon. As Sir Sydney was turning round to give the order to dismount, a cannon shot took off the poor fellow's head. "This," said the Admiral, "settles the question; Major, the horse is at your service."

having broken the blade of his sabre, received from Sir Ralph the weapon of which he had despoiled the French hussar.

The cavalry being completely repulsed, Sir Ralph walked firmly to the redoubt on the right of the Guards, from which a commanding view of the entire battle-field could be obtained. The French, though driven from the camp, still maintained the battle on the right, and, charging with their reserve cavalry, attacked the foreign brigade. Here, too, they were resolutely repulsed; and their infantry, finding their efforts everywhere unsuccessful, changed their formation and acted *en tirailleur*, with the exception of one battalion, which still held a flèche* in front of the redoubt, on either flank of which the Republican colours were planted.

At this time the ammunition of the British was totally exhausted; some regiments, particularly the reserve, had not a single cartridge; and in the battery the supply for the guns was reduced to a single round. In consequence, the British fire on the right had nearly ceased, but in the centre the engagement still continued.

There the attack had commenced at daybreak; a column of grenadiers, supported by a heavy

* *Flèche*, in field fortification, is a work with two faces, generally used to cover the quarter guards of a camp, or any advanced post, as a tête de pont, &c.

line of infantry, furiously assailing the Guards, driving in the flankers which had been thrown out to check their advance. Observing the echelon* formation of the British, the French general instantly attempted to turn their left; but the officer commanding on that flank as promptly prevented it, by wheeling some companies sharply back, while Coots's brigade having come up, and opening its musketry, obliged the enemy to give way and retire. Finding the attack in column fail, the French broke into extended order, and opened a scattered fusilade, while every gun that could be brought to bear by their artillery, was turned on the English position. But all was vain; though suffering heavily from this murderous fire, the formation of the Guards was coolly corrected when disturbed by the cannonade—while the fine and imposing attitude of the regiments, removed all hope that they could be shaken, and prevented any renewal of attack.

The British left had never been seriously attempted, consequently its casualties were very

* *Echelon*, in military parlance, is the movement of companies or regiments, when each division follows that which preceded it, like the steps of a ladder. It is employed when changing from a *direct* to an *oblique* or diagonal formation. The *oblique* changes are produced by the wheel, less than the quarter circle of division, from line; the *direct* are effected by a perpendicular and successive march of divisions from line to front or rear.

few, and were merely occasioned by a distant fire from the French guns, and a trifling interchange of musketry.

While the British right was, from want of ammunition, nearly *hors de combat*, the French approached the redoubt once more. They, too, had expended their cartridges—and both the assailants and assailed actually pelted the other with stones,* of which missiles there was a very abundant supply upon the ground. A sergeant of the 28th had his skull beaten in by a blow, and died upon the spot. The grenadiers of the 40th, however, not relishing this novel mode of attack and defence, moved out to end the business with the bayonet. Instantly the assailants ran — the sharpshooters abandoned the hollows—and the battalion, following their example, evacuated the flèche, leaving the battle-ground in front unoccupied by any save the dead and dying.

Menou's attempts had all been signally defeated. He perceived that the British lines had sustained no impression that would justify a continuation of the attack, and he determined to retreat. His brigades accordingly moved off under the heights of their position in excellent order; and though, for a considerable distance, they were forced to retire within an easy range of cannon shot, the total want of ammunition obliged the English batteries to remain silent, and permit the French

* Wilson.

march to be effected with trifling molestation. The cannon on the British left, and the guns of some men-of-war cutters, which had anchored close in with the land upon the right, kept up a galling fire, their shots plunging frequently into the French ranks, and particularly those of a corps of cavalry posted on a bridge over the canal of Alexandria, to observe any movement the British left might threaten.

At ten o'clock the action had ended. Sir Ralph Abercrombie previously refused to quit the field, and remained exposed to the heavy cannonade directed on the battery where he stood, until perfectly assured that the French defeat had been decisive. From the fatal wound he appeared at first to feel but little inconvenience, complaining only of the contusion on his breast:* when, however, the day was won, and exertion no longer necessary, nature yielded, and in an exhausted state he was carried in a hammock off the field, accompanied by the tears and blessings of the soldiery. In the evening he was removed, for better care, on board the flag-ship, where he continued until his death.

* The pain attendant upon wounds is very uncertain, and depends chiefly on the means by which they have been inflicted. It is said, "that a wound from a grape-shot is less quietly borne than a wound from round shot or musketry. The latter is seldom known in the night, except from the falling of the individual, whereas the former not unfrequently draws forth loud lamentations."—*Leith Hay.*

Immediate attention was bestowed upon the wounded, who, from the confined nature of the ground on which the grand struggles of the day had occurred, were lying in fearful numbers all around. Many of the sufferers had been wounded by grape-shot, others mangled by the sabres or trodden down by the horses of the cavalry. Death had been busily employed. Of the British, two hundred and forty were dead, including six officers; eleven hundred and ninety men and sixty officers wounded; and thirty privates and three officers missing. Other casualties had occurred. The tents had been shred to pieces by the French guns, and many of the wounded and sick, who were lying there, were killed. No wonder could be expressed that the loss of life had been so terrible, for thousands of brass cannon balls were lying loosely about, and glistening on the sands.

The French loss had been most severe. One thousand and fifty bodies were buried* on the field of battle, and nearly seven hundred wounded were found mingled with the dead. The total loss sustained by Menou's army could not

* In a sandy soil the decomposition of animal matter proceeds slowly. On the landing of the Capitan Pasha in the bay of Aboukir, his army encamped on the beach, near the place where four thousand Turks had formerly perished. They had been interred upon the plain where they had fallen, but, although two years had elapsed, the corruption of the battle-field was intolerable; every hoof-mark baring a corpse in partial putridity, while the clothes remained perfectly entire.

have been much under four thousand; and in this the greater portion of his principal officers must be included. General Roiz was found dead in the rear of the redoubt, and the French order of battle discovered in his pocket. Near the same place two guns had been abandoned,* and these, with a stand of colours, fell, as trophies of their victory, to the conquerors.

No army could have behaved more gallantly than the British. Surrounded, partially broken, and even without a cartridge left, the contest was continued, and a victory won. That the French fought bravely, that their attacks were vigorously made, and, after discomfiture, as boldly repeated, must be admitted; and that, in becoming the assailant, Menou conferred an immense advantage on the British, is equally true. There Menou betrayed a want of judgment; for had he but waited forty-eight hours the British must have attacked him. Indeed, the assault was already planned; and, as it was to have been made in the night, considering the strength of their

* One gun, an Austrian eight-pounder, was lying dismounted in front of the redoubt. In the darkness of the morning it had been too far advanced, and a round of grape from an English twenty-four-pounder in battery, had annihilated the men attached to it, and killed the four horses.

* * * * * *

The colours bore most honourable inscriptions:—"Le Passage de la Serivia; Le Passage du Tagliamento; Le Passage de l'Isonzo, Le Prise de Graz, Le Pont de Lodi."

position, and the fine *matériel* of the Republican troops, a more precarious trial would never have been hazarded. But the case was desperate; the successes of the 8th and 13th,—and dearly bought, though gloriously achieved, they were, — must have been rendered nugatory, unless forward operations could have been continued. In short, Menou fought Abercrombie's battle—and he who must have been assailed, became himself the assailant.

Military criticism, like political disquisitions, come not within the design of a work merely intended to describe the action of the battle, or the immediate events that preceded or resulted; but, if the truth were told, during these brief operations, from the landing to the evening of the 21st, mistakes took place on both sides. The military character of Britain had been sadly lowered by mismanagement at home, and still more ridiculously undervalued abroad,—and it remained for future fields and a future conqueror to re-establish for England a reputation in arms, and prove that the island-spirit wanted only a field for its display.

After lingering a few days, the French Generals Lannuse and Bodet died of their wounds; and on the evening of the 28th, the British army had to lament the decease of their beloved and talented commander. An attempt to extract the ball, attended with great pain, was unsuccessful.

Mortification ensued, Sir Ralph sank rapidly, and while his country and his army engrossed his every thought, he expired, full of years and honour, universally and most justly lamented.*

The eulogy of his successor in command thus concludes: "Were it permitted for a soldier to regret any one who has fallen in the service of his country, I might be excused for lamenting him more than any other person; but it is some consolation to those who tenderly loved him, that as his life was honourable so was his death glorious. His memory will be recorded in the annals of his country, will be sacred to every British soldier, and embalmed in the recollection of a grateful posterity."

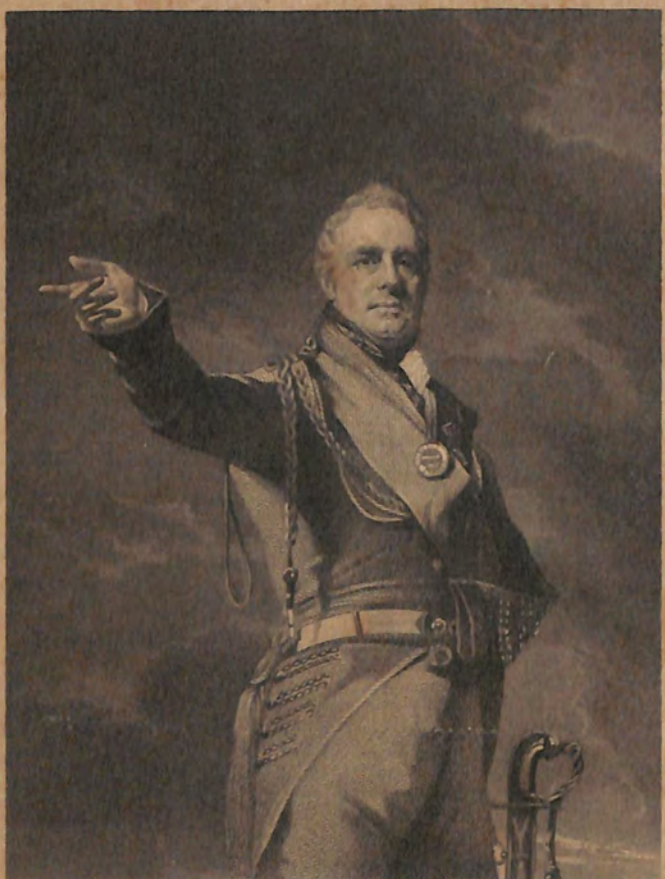
* The body was conveyed to Malta in a frigate, and buried in the north-east bastion of Valetta. A black marble slab, with a Latin inscription, marks the place where the ashes of the brave old commander are deposited.

CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.

Expedition to the Cape.—Troops employed.—Occurrences during the voyage.—Fleet arrives on the coast of Africa.—Cape described.—Its garrison.—Janssens' plans.—Landing delayed.—Effected on the 6th.—Action with the Batavian army.—Total defeat of Janssens.—Advance on Cape Town.—Its defences.—Town capitulates.—Negotiation between English and Dutch Generals.—Colony surrendered.

In 1805, the British Government, having ascertained that the Cape of Good Hope had only a force, under two thousand regular troops, for its protection, and that the militia and inhabitants were well-inclined to assist an English army, in case a landing should be made, determined to attempt the reduction of that colony, by the employment of a body of troops cantoned in the neighbourhood of Cork, assisted by some regiments already on board the India ships at Falmouth.

The expedition was to be a secret one, and the troops embarked at Cork were ostensibly intended for service in the Mediterranean. It was supposed that this report would prevent suspicion, particularly as the Company's fleet sailed alone, as if its destination was really Madras di-



Painted by Sir Henry Raeburn. Engraved by J. Stodart

GENERAL, THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
SIR DAVID BAIRD

rect. Sealed orders were, however, given to the commanders to be opened in a certain latitude,—and in these they were ordered to rendezvous at Madeira.

The troops composing the expedition were placed under the command of General Baird. They comprised the 24th, 38th, 59th, 71st, 72nd, 83rd, and 98th, part of the 20th light dragoons, with artillery, artificers, and recruits, making a total force of six thousand six hundred and fifty rank and file.

It was at first suspected that some troops which had left Rochfort in two line-of-battle ships, and escaped the vigilance of our cruisers, might have been intended to reinforce the garrison at the Cape, and General Baird conceived the corps intrusted to him not sufficiently strong to achieve the objects of the expedition. He asked, under this impression, for an additional force, and stated the grounds on which the request was made; but, in the mean time, it was ascertained that the French troops had proceeded to the West Indies; and that, therefore, the Cape of Good Hope had received no increase to its military establishment.

After another application to obtain an increase to the corps already under his orders, by having the 8th regiment added to the force, the expedition sailed, stopping at Madeira and St. Salvador to obtain water and provisions. Nothing of

moment occurred in the voyage to South America; the passage was tedious, and an Indiaman and transport ran on a low sandy island, called the Roccas, and were totally lost. Fortunately, the men on board and twelve chests of dollars were saved from the wreck. Only three individuals perished; — of these, General Yorke, in command of the artillery, was one, and Major Spicer, the next in seniority, succeeded him. While staying at St. Salvador, the regiments were landed and inspected, a remount of fifty horses obtained for the cavalry, and, all arrangements being completed, the expedition sailed for its final destination on the 28th of November, and made the African coast, a little to the northward of the Cape, on the 4th of January 1806.

"Table Bay, on the shore, and almost in the centre of which Cape Town stands, receives its name from that extraordinary eminence called Table Mountain, which rises about three thousand six hundred and eighty-seven feet above the level of the sea, and which terminates in a perfectly flat surface at that height, where the face of the rock on the side of Cape Town descends almost perpendicularly. To the eastward of the mountain, separated from it by a chasm, is Charles' Mount, more generally called the Devil's Tower; and on the westward, a round hill rises on the right hand of the bay, called the Lion's Head, from

which a ridge of high land, terminating in another smaller hill, called the Lion's Rump, stretches towards the sea."*

The town itself is handsome and extensive; and the streets, intersecting each other at right angles, are broad and airy, generally built with stone, and with terraces in front. The Company's gardens, walks, parade, and castle, all add to the beauty of the place, and render it superior to any colonial city in the possession of Great Britain.

The coast is everywhere dangerous — landing, excepting in the bays, and that too in favourable weather, almost impracticable; and hence, a very inferior force on shore, if the surf was at all up, might successfully resist every attempt at the disembarkation of an army.

The troops in garrison consisted of a detachment of Batavian artillery, the 22nd Dutch regiment of the line, a German regiment of Waldecks, and a native corps, which acted as light infantry. To these, an auxiliary battalion, formed from the seamen and marines of a frigate and corvette which had been wrecked upon the coast, were added; while a number of irregulars, mounted and dismounted, comprised of the boors, and armed with guns of enormous length of barrel, completed the force of General Janssens, who was then commandant at the Cape.

The governor had a high reputation, both as a

* Life of Sir David Baird.

soldier and a civilian, and from the excellence of his measures since his arrival at the Cape, was held most deservedly in great estimation by the colonists. On the appearance of the British fleet, although his numerical superiority was greater than that of his enemy, he wisely considered that the *matériel* of the invaders was far more efficient than his own; and leaving a garrison in Cape Town, he determined to fall back on the interior with the remainder of his troops, and carry on a desultory war, until the arrival of a French or Dutch fleet from Europe should enable him to resort to active measures and save the colony. This plan, though ruinous to the inhabitants if carried out, would have rendered the subjugation of the Cape a very difficult and tedious undertaking for the British—and in this posture of affairs the expedition made the coast, and came to anchor on the evening of the 4th, just out of range of the batteries in Table Bay.

The weather was fortunately calm, but the day was too far advanced to admit a landing of the troops. All was prepared, however, for effecting it on the morrow. The coast was sounded, the approaches to the town reconnoitred, and a small inlet, sixteen miles north-east of the town, called Leopard's Bay, was selected as the point on which the troops should be disembarked. The transports accordingly weighed and took their stations, while the men-of-war got into a position

to cover the landing, in case of opposition, with their guns.

During the night the surf had risen so prodigiously, that at daylight it was declared unsafe for boats to attempt the beach, and a landing at Saldana Bay was proposed. There it could be easily effected, but it would carry the army a distance from the town, separate it on its march from the fleet, oblige it to depend for its supplies on what provisions it could carry, or any which by accidental circumstances it could obtain on its route: it would also entail a harassing march of seventy miles on soldiers so long cooped up on shipboard; and that too, in the hot season of the year, over a heavy sand, where water was not procurable.* Still, the uncertainty of the weather, and the necessity of an immediate attack, overcame all other objections; and on the evening of the 5th, General Beresford, with the 38th regiment and the 20th light dragoons, sailed for Saldana, with an understanding, that the remainder of the army should proceed thither on the following morning.

But daylight on the 6th broke with happier promise; the surf had gone down considerably; and it was at once decided that the troops should be landed without farther loss of time. The Highland brigade was instantly transferred from the transports to the boats, and the 71st, 72nd,

* "Details," &c.

and 93rd, effected a landing with but a single casualty, and that arising from the swamping of a launch, by which five-and-thirty Highlanders were drowned.

No other loss attended the operation. The light company of the 93rd cleared the brushwood of a few skirmishers that had been thrown out by the enemy, and the remainder of the troops debarked without any opposition.

The artillery, consisting of four six-pounders and a couple of howitzers, were landed on the 7th; and the whole of the force being now safely on shore, the British general commenced his march direct on Cape Town, the guns being dragged through the sands by fatigue parties furnished from the fleet.

The advance was unopposed until the English army had approached a line of heights, some four miles distant from the landing place. The Blawberg, as one of these eminences is called, was occupied by Burgher cavalry—and the videts announced that General Janssens was in position on the other side of the high grounds, and his whole disposable force drawn up in order of battle. The march was steadily continued, and when the Blawberg was crowned by the advanced guard, the Batavian army, formed in two lines, with twenty-five pieces of artillery and a large corps of irregular cavalry, was discovered.

General Baird formed his corps into two co-

lumns of brigades; the right, comprising the 24th, 59th, and 83rd, under Lieutenant-Colonel Baird, commanding in the absence of General Beresford; and the left, consisting of the Highland regiments, under General Fergusson. While deploying into line, the Batavian guns opened, and their cavalry, by a left extension, threatened the right of the British. Baird's brigade refused its right, checking the burgher horse with its musketry; and the Highland regiments on the left made a rapid movement under a heavy cannonade, and advanced to the charge. The right wing of the Batavian army broke without waiting an assault—the left followed the example—and the field was totally abandoned by the enemy, with a considerable loss in killed and wounded.

Without cavalry it was impossible to complete the *déroute*. The guns were, therefore, carried off; and quitting the road to Cape Town, Janssens, in pursuance of his previous plan, marched eastward, and moved towards Hottentot Holland, with a hope of protracting a war in the interior. Of course, the capital was the object of the conqueror. The fleet was in an exposed anchorage—and to equip his army for ulterior operations and secure his communication with the sea, it was necessary to possess Cape Town.

The advance was very distressing, and the troops suffered much. The badness of the roads, the heat of the weather, and worse still, the scarcity of

water, was severely felt before the brigades, at a late hour, reached their bivouacs in Reit Valley, a farming establishment belonging to the Dutch government. Here some salt provisions, which had been floated through the surf, were brought up by the marines, and partitioned among the soldiers; while the few and scanty springs attached to the farm afforded them an indifferent supply of water. An immediate movement on the capital was imperative; and the next day the British reached a position beside the Salt River, an inlet some short distance from the strong lines which cover Cape Town.

These defences are formed of a chain of redoubts, with a connecting parapet, furnished with banquettes* and a dry-ditch. They extend about eight hundred yards, and unite the Devil's Berg with the sea. These lines were very formidable, as they had been considerably strengthened by the English during their possession of the colony. One hundred and fifty guns and howitzers were mounted on the works; and several batteries had been erected on the escarpe of the mountain, that would have exposed assailing troops to a flanking fire, and, in storming the

* *The parapet* is a part of the rampart elevated six or seven feet above the rest, to cover the troops from fire.

The banquette is four feet lower than the parapet, and two or three higher than the rampart. It is the platform from which musketry is discharged, with the least possible exposure to the soldiers from the fire of the besiegers.

lines, have occasioned a severe loss of life. One battery and blockhouse were placed on a shoulder of the hill, thirteen hundred feet above the level of the plain. But this was probably the least effective of the defences; as, in modern warfare, a plunging fire is not regarded much. A mile behind the lines the castle of Good Hope is situated at the entrance of the town. It is a pentagon, with outworks strong enough to require a regular approach; and that side of the city which overlooks the bay is secured alike by the fire of the castle, and a number of batteries mounted with guns of heavy calibre.

To carry works so extensive, and so formidable in their defences, with a small corps like Baird's, unprovided with any artillery but the light field-pieces they had brought through the sands, was not to be attempted; and it was determined to obtain some heavy guns, and a reinforcement of seamen and marines from the fleet. But these were not required: the enemy sent out a flag of truce, and an armistice was agreed upon, which terminated ultimately in a capitulation. The town and its defences were given up to the British army, and, without a shot, works were surrendered to a force of not four thousand men, on which were mounted four hundred and fifty-six guns and mortars, most of them of the heaviest calibre.

Janssens, after his defeat, retired towards the

interior; and having disbanded the militia and burgher cavalry, which had accompanied him, he took a position at Kloof, with twelve hundred regular troops, and some five-and-twenty guns. General Baird, anxious to effect the tranquillity of the colony and terminate hostilities at once, despatched General Beresford to make overtures to the Dutch governor, and induce him to capitulate. A long and doubtful negotiation took place between the British and Batavian commanders, which eventually ended in the whole of the colony of the Cape of Good Hope and its dependencies, with all the rights and privileges held and exercised by the Dutch government, being formally transferred to his Britannic Majesty.

Although the capture of the Cape was effected with trifling loss, and the opposition given to the British troops was far less formidable than might have been anticipated, still the operations which were so deservedly crowned with success, were boldly planned and bravely executed. Janssens exhibited no military talent,—and in a country abounding in strong positions, to offer battle in an open plain, and oppose an irregular force to a well-disciplined army, was a strange decision of the Batavian commander, and could only terminate in defeat. In the engagement in which the Dutch army was so easily routed, and the ulterior operations which followed, there was nothing of that brilliancy which marked other victories

achieved by British bravery. But no conquest was attended with more advantages and permanent results. A noble colony was obtained for Great Britain with little loss of life, and the only portion of Africa worth her occupation was secured to the "Mistress of the seas."

MAIDA.

Preliminary remarks.—State of Sicily.—Change in the command.—French force in Calabria.—Sir John Stuart lands there. — Strength of British and French corps. — Reynier quits his position to attack Stuart—is completely defeated. — Loss, French and British. — Subsequent operations. — Scylla captured. — Insurrection of the Calabrese. — Fall of Gaeta. — Scylla captured. — Garrison brought safely off. — Concluding observations.

It has been remarked with great justice, that until the Peninsular war had been for some time in progress, the military enterprizes of Great Britain invariably failed, from the blind policy of those who planned them. Instead of condensing the power of the empire into one grand and sustained effort, its strength was frittered away in paltry and unprofitable expeditions. An army, imposing in its full integrity, if subdivided into corps, and employed on detached services and in different countries, can achieve nothing beyond a temporary success. Soon after its divided brigades are landed on their scenes of action, their weakness produces their discomfiture, and they retire necessarily before a superior force. In the first moment of disembarkation it may create a

temporary alarm; but beyond this no object can be gained, and the result ends in an idle demonstration.

Political details are generally unconnected with the actual occurrences on the battle-field; and it will be enough to remark, that Sicily should have at this period commanded more attention from England than she did. Naturally defensible, with a well-affected population of nearly a million and a half, she had been taught to place but little reliance on her allies. One British corps held Messina,—but a French force was moving to the extremity of Calabria, avowedly to drive it from the island. Though well-affected, the Sicilians were distrustful,—they feared that they should be abandoned to the vengeance of those troops who had already overrun Naples,—and they believed the British regiments waited only until the French army should make its descent, when they would embark for Malta, and leave the Sicilians to their fate.

At this time Sir John Stuart succeeded Sir James Craig, a man best described by terming him an "old-school commander." Under him the army had been totally inactive; and eight thousand excellent troops were permitted to occupy their quarters idly, when so much depended upon a bold, even though not a very fortunate, display of energy in the British. Stuart at once perceived the mischievous consequences this

indolence of his predecessor had occasioned; and determined by active operations to redeem the British army from the apathetic character it had too justly obtained among the Sicilian people.

The British corps, amounting to eight thousand men, was concentrated at Messina. In Calabria the French were considerably detached; and though numerically stronger, with three thousand in the South, four thousand in Upper Calabria, and the remainder occupying numerous posts, it was quite practicable to take them in detail, effect a landing between the two corps, engage them separately, and clear the country from St. Euphemia to the Castle of Scylla. To ensure success, despatch and secrecy were required. The first rested with Stuart, and every arrangement necessary on his part was effected; the latter depended on the Sicilian court, and by it the secrecy of the intended expedition was undoubtedly betrayed.

On the 28th of June, at Melazzo, the embarkation of five thousand men was quietly accomplished—and on the third morning they landed on the beach of St. Euphemia. During the 2nd and 3rd, stores and supplies were disembarked; and moving forward, on that evening the pickets of the rival armies confronted each other. The enemy's force was at first supposed to be merely the division of Upper Calabria; but that of the South had formed a junction; and Reynier had now seven

thousand infantry, and a few troops of cavalry amounting to three hundred and fifty sabres.

The British in numbers were greatly inferior. Five thousand infantry, six six-pounders and eight mountain guns, formed their whole strength. Reynier was also in position. His army was posted on some heights which overlooked the march of the British as they moved through a low country, at first partially wooded, but opening into a spacious plain, and of course permitted their numbers and dispositions to be correctly ascertained by their enemy as they were advancing.

This, as the result proved, was an unfortunate advantage for the French General. Whether reckoning too much on his opponent's inferiority of force, or undervaluing the character of his soldiers, Reynier, supposing that Stuart, having advanced in error, would retire on discovering his mistake, abandoned the heights, passed a river in his front, and offered battle on the plain. As his columns approached, General Stuart at once perceived, from the ground they covered, that Reynier's force was much larger than he had expected, and that he had united his detached brigades; but, with the just confidence of a British leader, he trusted to the bravery of his troops; and in that safe reliance boldly stood "the hazard of the die."

The battle commenced about nine o'clock.

There was no manœuvring on either side. The ground was level, and both armies, under cover of their light troops, advanced steadily and deployed into line. The enemy's left was composed of voltigeurs, and the right of the British that opposed them (Kempt's brigade) was formed of a light infantry battalion and the Corsican Rangers. After an interchange of three volleys, the French were ordered to advance—at the same time the British lowered their bayonets, and both pressed boldly forward. The front ranks were now within six paces of each other—the French advancing, cheered by the "*En avant, mes enfans!*" of their officers. The British needed no encouragement. On they came, with that imposing steadiness which told what the result must be when bayonets crossed and "steel met steel." The voltigeurs had not firmness to abide the shock; they broke and turned, but too late for flight to save them. Their front rank was bayoneted and trodden down—while the rear endeavoured to escape by a disorderly rush from the field, exposed to a severe loss from the British artillery.

Kempt's gallant and successful charge was ably seconded by Ackland's brigade, which held the right centre. They advanced against the demi-brigade opposed to them, forced it back across the Amato, and never allowed the routed wing one moment to rally. The pursuit was so ardently

continued, that for a mile the French were followed by the victors, suffering heavily in killed and wounded, and losing a number of prisoners.

This success, though brilliant, was far from being decisive. The ardour of the right wing had carried it away, leaving the left totally unsupported, and open to Reynier's undivided efforts. From the superiority of his force, he showed a larger front, and availing himself of this advantage, endeavoured to turn the British left. In this attempt his cavalry had nearly succeeded. After a feint upon the centre, they wheeled sharply to the right, making a flank movement, while their infantry threatened the English line with a charge. This was the crisis of the action. The French advanced,—Stuart refusing his flank, and obliqueing his line from the centre. Reynier's cavalry were about to charge, when, fortunately, the 20th regiment, under Colonel Ross, which had landed after the march of the army, came up. The attack was already made, the cavalry advancing, when Ross, under cover of some underwood, deployed in double-quick. Within a short distance, a close and murderous volley was thrown in, and the cavalry completely broken. The British line cheered and moved forward, the French gave way, and a complete *déroute* succeeded. No victory, considering the numbers opposed, could have been more

decisive. Seven hundred killed, a thousand prisoners, and a large proportion of wounded, were the estimated loss of the enemy—while this was achieved by an amount of casualties greatly disproportioned, the victors having but one officer and forty-four men killed, and eleven officers and two hundred and seventy-one men wounded.

For that night the British army bivouacked on the battle-ground—and having received supplies from the shipping, advanced on the 6th to overtake the enemy's rear; while a brigade under Colonel Oswald marched on the French depôt at Montelione, of which it took possession, making six hundred prisoners. The whole of the commissariat stores, with the entire baggage, and the military chest, were captured; and the remnant of the French army was saved only by abandoning arms and accoutrements, and retiring with all the confusion attendant upon a signal defeat.

Nothing could exceed the enthusiasm with which the victors were received. The defended places along the coast, turned landwards by the army, of course, surrendered unconditionally. The whole of the Peninsula was rapidly crossed, and on the 11th of July the leading British brigade invested the Castle of Scylla.

This place, so deeply associated with ancient recollections, stands on a sheer rock, commanding the eastern point of the entrance of the

Straits of Messina. The difficulties experienced by navigators occasionally in this confined channel, almost realizes the old-world legends of its dangers. Once caught in the currents, when passing Cape Pelorus with light or contrary winds, a vessel must run for the anchorage, which lies directly beneath the batteries of the castle; and hence the possession of the place, especially to a maritime nation, was an object of paramount importance.

For some days the efforts of the English were confined to firing on the castle with the field guns. Of course, artillery of a light calibre could effect nothing but annoyance; until, on the 19th, when some heavy cannon were obtained from Messina. On the 21st they were placed in battery and opened with great effect; and on the same evening, as the guns were breaching rapidly, the commandant accepted terms, and surrendered the castle to the besiegers.

Until circumstances, unnecessary to detail here, induced the British army to abandon Calabria, Scylla was strengthened and maintained. The Calabrese were now in open insurrection, and a force, as dangerous and dreaded by the French as the Spanish guerillas were afterwards, sprang up among the mountains of the upper province, and occasioned the invading army, under Massena, a constant alarm, and sometimes a serious loss.

In a neglected country like Calabria crime and

violence were fostered by the total want of a police, and the difficulties which interposed in bringing offenders to justice. The mountains afforded a secure asylum to delinquents; there they retired when pursued, and there occasionally uniting into bodies of considerable strength, by a sudden descent upon the low country, they interrupted the French communications, endangered their detached posts, and became at last so troublesome, as to require Murat's most strenuous exertions, before their outrages could be repressed, and their leaders exterminated. To an *elève*, who from an aid-de-camp had been raised to the rank of general, the task was intrusted; and Manhes, it would appear, executed his orders with firmness and ability.* Though deserted by the allies on whom they had so strongly depended, the Calabrese, after the British had left their peninsula for Sicily, kept up a desultory contest; and, for a considerable time, "neither excessive severity of punishment, burning their villages, destroying their possessions, nor promises of amnesty, brought them to submit to Joseph's government."†

Gaeta, though second only to Gibraltar as a place of natural strength, after a weak defence, surrendered to the French. The Prince of Hesse Philipstal, who had been appointed governor,

* "Details," &c.

† Campaign in Calabria.

was, in the unhappy spirit of these times, intrusted with a command for which he was totally unsuited. He threw away his ammunition and ruined his artillery by a too early and ineffectual fire, himself standing for hours on the batteries performing the duty of a bombardier, and estimating the merit of his defence, rather by the number of rounds discharged from his guns, than their effect upon the besiegers.*

* It is scarcely conceivable how much the effect of artillery depends on the position of the guns, and the accuracy with which they are pointed. One gun, well placed and skilfully served, has been known to do more execution than one hundred when laid in an unfavourable situation. This was most strikingly illustrated in an attack made by Sir Sydney Smith on a martello tower, armed with two heavy guns, and situated on the extremity of Cape Licosa.

The Pompée, of eighty guns, and two frigates, anchored within eight hundred yards of the battery, and opened their broadsides. Their fire was kept up with unremitting fury, until their ammunition failed, and many of the guns had become unserviceable. The battery returned the fire slowly—but every shot took effect. The Pompée was the only object of its fire, and she was at last completely crippled, and obliged to haul off with the loss of her mizen-top-mast, and nearly forty men killed and wounded. Almost every shot had hulled her—while the concentrated fire from three men-of-war had failed entirely in silencing the French cannonade.

On the tower being afterwards surrendered, it appeared that the carriage of one of the guns had been disabled by the second shot, and subsequently that it had been fired as it lay on the sill of the embrasure,—so that, in point of fact, the batteries of the Pompée and her consorts had been unable to overpower *the fire of a single gun*, and the opposition of a garrison, consisting of one officer and twenty-five soldiers.

The Castle of Scylla was very differently defended. As a point of communication with the Calabrese, the British General had determined to hold it to the last,—and such were the instructions given to Colonel Robertson, and the orders were admirably fulfilled. As the fortress, seaward, was open to the fleet, a flight of steps was cut in the rock to the water's edge, and this outlet to the sea was not visible from any ground occupied by the enemy. When Scylla was literally reduced to a heap of ruins, and the French in the very act of entering a breach so extensively ruined as to be totally indefensible, the garrison, during a lull in a gale that had been blowing for two preceding days, were cleverly brought off.

On the morning of the 15th, Colonel Robertson announced by telegraph to Sir Sydney Smith that the works were nearly destroyed, and his guns dismounted or disabled. When the gale moderated on the 19th, the Admiral instantly gave orders to rescue the soldiers,—and the men-of-war boats pulled right across the bay under a tremendous fire, and relieved the brave garrison with a loss comparatively trifling. The French were actually in the fort, their batteries maintaining a sweeping fire of grape-shot and shells, and yet in this bold and successful effort, the united casualties of both services did not amount to more than twenty men.

Although military achievements on a minor

scale have been eclipsed by the more brilliant conquests obtained by British armies in subsequent campaigns, still Maida was not only a glorious, but, in its results, a most important victory. Independently of humbling a presumptuous enemy, raising the depressed reputation of the British army, and converting the distrusting population of Sicily into grateful admirers,* the positive results of Sir John Stuart's expedition were the destruction of all military and naval resources of Calabria, and the occupation of a post which for eighteen months secured the navigation of the Straits of Messina, and, in a great degree, occasioned the meditated descent on Sicily to fail.

* Campaign in Calabria.

OPENING OF PENINSULAR WAR.

BATTLE OF ROLICA.

British troops sent to the Continent. — Failure of the expedition to Gottenburgh. — State of Portugal. — An army despatched to assist in its deliverance, — Lands in Mondego bay. — Advance of the British. — Movements of the French. — Village of Rolica. — Battle. — Anecdotes and death of Colonel Lake. — Arrival of reinforcements.

THE employment of a British army to assist in the liberation of Portugal, appears only to have been decided upon, after the wildest design which ever crossed the imagination of a blundering statesman, had been found too absurd, even to admit of an experimental trial. It had been considered advisable to turn a military force against the overweening influence of Napoleon on the Continent; and an army of ten thousand men, under the command of Sir John Moore, was accordingly despatched, in May 1808, to assist Sweden in defending herself against the united powers of Russia, France, and Denmark. On reaching Gottenburgh, the British regiments were not even permitted to debark; but men and horses, after a tedious voyage, were left by their inhospitable ally "tossing in the anchorage." Though reduced to a pitiable

state of weakness, the Swedish Monarch was actually dreaming of conquest; and a power, politically impotent, demanded of those despatched to assist in his defence, that they should join him in aggression. A descent on the island of Zealand, in face of armed fortresses and a superior force, was first propounded, and, of course, rejected. "It was next proposed that the British alone should land in Russian Finland, storm a fortress, and take a position there." This notion was still more prepoşterous than the former; and Sir John Moore endeavoured to prove that "ten thousand British soldiers were insufficient to encounter the undivided force of the Russian empire, which could be quickly brought against them, at a point so near St. Petersburgh."* Some other projects, equally impracticable, were declined—this ill-advised expedition ended as might have been expected,—and after being exposed to the indignity of an arrest, the British General returned to England with his army, "leaving Sweden," in Napoleon's words, "to fulfil her detinies."

Spain had in the mean time been overrun by the French armies,—the capital was occupied, the dynasty changed, and the kingdom prostrate at the feet of Napoleon. Yet in this gloomy hour, when trodden to the earth, the national spirit remained unbroken—and the flame

* Life of Sir John Moore.

of popular discontent was not quenched, but smouldering. Cruelty and oppression had roused the Spaniards into action; and a desultory war raged in several provinces, and every day became more formidable and fierce.

Nor was this hostility to foreign domination confined to Spain; it had spread itself to Portugal, and Junot's arbitrary measures had roused a spirit of resistance that wanted but an opportunity to display itself. A recurrence to terrorism by the French Lieutenant only provoked retaliation. Oporto revolted, and deforced the garrison. A rising in the north, and the establishment of a provisional government succeeded — while simultaneously the insurrection broke out in the opposite extremity of the kingdom; and the French, after an unsuccessful attempt to suppress it, were driven from Algarve.

Junot, at first, endeavoured to temporise and gain time, should no other object be achieved. But the Portuguese saw clearly his designs, and would no longer permit themselves to be deluded by the hollow professions of one, whom they justly looked upon as the enslaver of their country. Risings became general; and to repress this spirit of insubordination, the French resorted to severity. It was decreed that resistance to the troops should be punished by the destruction of the town or village where it occurred; and that individuals taken in arms should be

shot, their property pillaged, and their houses levelled to the earth. These were no idle threats; they were, on the contrary, carried into ferocious execution. Leyria was destroyed by Margaron—and Loison's treatment of the inhabitants of Evora and Guardo, is indelibly branded on the revengeful memories of the Portuguese. These towns were razed and plundered, numbers of their citizens and priests put to the sword, the women violated, and to neither sex nor age was mercy extended. To crown the whole, excessive contributions were laid upon an impoverished people—and inability to pay made a pretext for spoliation. Could it then be wondered at that a terrible reaction ensued, that the country should be overrun by guerillas,* and vengeance, when it could be obtained, most unmercifully exacted?

At this momentous period, England determined to make an effort in the cause of freedom, and come to the assistance of the oppressed. Although crippled by the number of irregular bands that were swarming over Alentejo, Junot held the fortresses of Almeida, Elvas, and Peniche, which, with the minor posts in their possession, gave the French a hold upon the country from which it would be difficult to drive them.

The force destined for the relief of Portugal was sent partly from Ireland, and partly from

* Details.

Gibraltar. Nine thousand men from Cork, under Sir Arthur Wellesley, landed in Mondego bay on the 6th of August—and these were joined, two days afterwards, by Spencer's division of five thousand — thus making a total force of about fourteen thousand, in which two hundred of the 20th Light Dragoons and eighteen pieces of artillery were included.

A combined movement with a Portuguese corps under Bernardine Friere having been arranged, it was determined to move at once upon the capital; and on the morning of the 9th the British advanced guard, consisting of a part of the 60th and 95th rifles, commenced its march, supported by the brigades of Generals Hill and Ferguson. On the next day the remainder of the army followed — the men provided with sixty rounds of cartridges, provisions for three days, and attended by a number of mules, loaded with stores of various descriptions. "No troops ever took the field in higher spirits, or in a state of more perfect discipline. Confident in their leader likewise, and no less confident in themselves, they desired nothing more ardently than to behold their enemy."*

On the 12th, Friere's corps joined at Leiria, but, under different pretexts, the Portuguese Commander declined co-operating as he had promised, and limited his assistance to one weak

* Marquis of Londonderry.

brigade of infantry and two hundred and fifty horse. Undaunted by this early disclosure of imbecility and bad faith, Sir Arthur determined to push on, and endeavour to engage the Duke of Abrantes before he could unite himself with Loison.

On receiving intelligence of the descent of the English, Junot, adding the brigade of Thomieres to that of Delaborde, despatched the latter towards Mondego, to observe the enemy closely, and use every means to retard their advance. Delaborde, accordingly moving to the coast, found himself on the eve of an affair with the British. He fell back leisurely as they advanced. His rear-guard quitted Caldas the evening before Sir Arthur entered it; and on the following morning, and for the first time on the Peninsula, the rival armies of France and England found themselves in each other's presence.

On the 15th, a trifling affair of outposts produced a few casualties,—and on the 16th Delaborde's position was reconnoitred, and dispositions made to attack it.

This, in a European command, was to be Wellington's maiden field. In the numbers engaged, Rolica bore no proportion to the masses combatant in future battles. But it was a well-contested and sanguinary encounter—and worthy to be the name first engraven on the long scroll of victories of which it gave such glorious promise.

The French position, in natural strength and romantic beauty, was unequalled; and when Delaborde had made up his mind to risk a battle, he displayed consummate judgment in selecting the ground on which the trial of strength should be decided.

The villages of Rolica and Caldas stand at either extremity of an extensive valley, opening to the west. In the centre, Obidos, with its ruined castle and splendid aqueduct, recals the days of Moorish glory. The village of Rolica stands on a bold height, surrounded by vineyards and olive groves—and a sandy plain extends in front, thickly studded with shrubs and dwarf wood. The eminence on which the village is placed, and where the French General formed his line of battle, has one flank rested on a rugged height, and the other on a mountain impassable to any but a goat-herd. Behind, lay a number of passes through the ridges in his rear, affording Delaborde a means of retreat; or, if he chose to contest them, a formidable succession of mountain posts.

All the arrangements for attack having been completed on the preceding evening, at dawn the British got under arms. A sweeter morning never broke;—the mountain mists dispersed, the sun shone gloriously out, a thousand birds were singing, and myriads of wild flowers shed their fragrance around. Nature seemed everywhere

in quiet and repose — presenting a strange contrast to the roar of battle which immediately succeeded, and the booming of artillery, as, repeated by a thousand echoes, it reverberated among the lately peaceful hills.

In three columns the brigades left their bivouacs. The right (Portuguese), consisting of twelve hundred infantry and fifty dragoons, were directed to make a considerable detour, turn the enemy's left flank, and bear down upon his rear. The left, two brigades of infantry, three companies of rifles, a brigade of light artillery, and forty horse, were to ascend the hills of Obidos, drive in Delaborde's posts, and turn his right at Rolica. Ferguson, who commanded, was also to watch lest Loison should move from Rio Mayor, and, if he came up, engage him, and prevent a junction with Delaborde. The centre, composed of four brigades,—those of Hill, Crawford, Nightingale, and Fane,—two brigades of guns, the remainder of the cavalry, and four hundred caçadores, were directed to advance up the heights and attack the enemy in front.

To traverse the distance between the British bivouac and French outposts (three leagues), consumed a good portion of the morning; and the march to the battle-ground, whether viewed with relevance to the beauty of its scenery, or the order of its execution, was most imposing.

When sudden irregularities of the surface dis-

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turbed the order of a column, it halted until the distances were corrected, and then marched silently on with the coolness of a review. Presently the light troops became engaged, the centre broke into columns of regiments, while the left pressed forward rapidly, and the rifles, on the right, bore down on the Tirailleurs. Delaborde's position was now critical, for Ferguson, topping the heights, threatened his rear. But the French General acted promptly—he abandoned the plain, and falling back upon the passes of the Sierra, took up a new position less assailable than the former one; and, from the difficult nature of the mountain surface, requiring, on Sir Arthur's part, a new disposition of attack.

Five separate columns were now formed, and to each a different pass was allotted. The openings in the heights were so narrow and difficult, that only a portion of the columns could come into fire. The pass on the extreme right was attacked by the Portuguese; the light troops of Hill's brigade and the 5th regiment advanced against the second; the centre was to be carried by the 9th and 29th, the fourth by the 45th, and the fifth by the 82nd.

Unfortunately the front attack was made either too soon, or difficulties had delayed the flanking corps—and, in consequence, the passes were all stormed, before Delaborde had been even aware that he was endangered on his flank and rear.

Regardless of the ground, than which nothing could be more formidable, the assailants mounted the ravines. Serious obstacles met them at every step. Rocks and groves overhung the gorges in the hills — and where the ground was tolerably open for a space from rocks, it was covered thickly with brushwood and wild myrtle. Thus the order of the column was deranged; a broken surface concealed the enemy, and suffered the French to keep up a withering fusilade on troops who had not leisure to return it.

The centre pass, on which the 29th and 9th were directed to advance, was particularly difficult. The 29th led, and the 9th supported it. Entering the gorge undauntedly, the leading companies were permitted to approach a ravine, with precipitous rocks on one side, and a thick myrtle wood on the other. From both a tremendous fire was unexpectedly opened. In front and on the flanks, the men fell by dozens; and, as the leading company was annihilated, the column, cumbered by its own dead and wounded, was completely arrested in its movement. But the check was only momentary. Colonel Lake, who led the regiment on horseback, waved his hat, and called on the men to follow. A wild cheer was returned, and a rush made up the pass. Notwithstanding the sustained fusilade on every side, the forward movement was successful, and after overcoming every attempt to repel their

daring charge, with diminished numbers the 29th crowned the plateau.

But the enemy were not to be easily beaten. Before the 9th could clear the pass, or the 29th form their line, a French battalion advanced and charged. They were most gallantly received; a severe contest ensued, and, after a mutual slaughter, the enemy were repulsed. With increased numbers, again and again the charges were repeated and repelled. At last the 9th got into action; and the head of the 5th regiment began to shew itself as it topped the summit of the second pass. On every point the attacks were successful—and to save himself from being cut off, Delaborde retired in perfect order; and from the difficulty of the ground and his superiority in cavalry, although pressed by the light troops, effected his retreat with little molestation.

This brilliant affair, from the strength of their position, and the obstinacy with which the French contested every inch of ground, cost the British a heavy loss. Even, when forced from the heights, Delaborde attempted to take a new position, and hold the village of Zambugeira. But he was driven back with the loss of three guns—and retreating through the pass of Runa, by a long night march, gained Montecheque next day.

The French casualties in killed, wounded, and prisoners amounted to a thousand men—and the

British to about half that number. Delaborde was among the wounded — and Colonel Lake in the return of the killed.

As this promising officer was universally regretted, the following anecdotes of one whom "the officers adored, the soldiers revered, and there were few who would not have laid down their lives for," will not be uninteresting.

When immediately in presence of the French 82nd, and a combat seemed inevitable, Lake's countenance appeared glowing with delight. At this moment he turned round, calling out, "Gentlemen, display the colours." The colours flew, the horse and he had another prance,* when he turned again, and addressed the line:—"Soldiers, I shall remain in front of you, and remember that the bayonet is the only weapon for a British soldier." The French at this instant retired, and the right of the 29th meeting the road, broke into sections and followed through the village of Colombeira.

The following is a characteristic anecdote of this lamented officer.

"The evening before the affair of Rolica there was every reason to believe the regiment would be among the first troops engaged the next morning, and there were two bad subjects under sentence of a court-martial for petty plundering. Colonel Lake, when he formed his regiment in

* Guthrie.

the evening for the punishment of the two culprits, knew full well that every man was satisfied they deserved it; but he did not say that. He spoke to the hearts of his soldiers; he told them he flogged those men not alone because they deserved it, but that he might deprive them of the honour of going into action with their comrades in the morning, and that he might not prevent the guard who was stationed over them from participating in it. The regiment was in much too high a state of discipline to admit of a word being said, but they were repeated all the evening from mouth to mouth; and the poor fellows who were flogged declared to me they would willingly on their knees at his feet, if they dared, have begged, as the greatest favour he could bestow, to be allowed to run the risk of being shot first, with the certainty of being flogged afterwards if they escaped."

Mr. Guthrie thus describes his death:—"A narrow steep ravine seemed the only accessible part, and up this Lake without further hesitation, led his grenadiers on horseback. The whole regiment followed with unexampled devotion and heroism, and gained the summit, but not without the loss of three hundred men in the desperate conflict, which took place almost hand to hand in the olive grove half way up the hill. Broken and overpowered by numbers, Lake fell, and his soldiers would have been driven down, if the

9th regiment had not rushed up with equal ardour, led by a no less gallant soldier, Colonel Stewart. The two regiments formed on the crown of the hill, supported on their right by the 5th, which had been less opposed, and the French retired, finding that their right was by this time turned. Colonel Lake on horseback on the top of the hill, seemed to have a charmed life. One French officer, of the name of Bellegarde, said afterwards that he had fired seven shots at him. Once he seemed to stagger as if he was hit, but it was only at the seventh shot he fell. It is probable he was right, for he was wounded in the back of the neck slightly; but the ball which killed him passed quite through from side to side beneath the arms; I think he must have fallen dead. The serjeant-major, Richards, seeing his Colonel fall, stood over him, like another Ajax, until he himself fell wounded in thirteen places by shot and bayonet. I gave him some water in his dying moments, and his last words were, 'I should have died happy if our gallant Colonel had been spared'—words that were reiterated by almost every wounded man."

Delaborde's defeat having left the road to Torres Vedras open, Sir Arthur pursued the French to Villa Verde, where the British halted for the night. Cheered by his opening success, the English leader seemed determined to improve it. Orders were accordingly issued to prepare for a

rapid march next day, and "it seemed as if no check would be given to the ardour of the troops till they should have won a second victory." But despatches were received that night, announcing the arrival of General Anstruther with a reinforcement of troops and stores. The fleet were reported to be at anchor off Peniche; and, to cover the disembarkation, and unite himself with the corps on board the transports, Sir Arthur's march was directed on Lourinho. There the British bivouacked that night,—and on the next morning took a position beside the village of Vimiero.

VIMIERO.

Vimiero. — Interview between the British Generals ends unsatisfactorily. — Junot unites his brigades, and advances. — Battle of Vimiero. — Burrard refuses to advance. — Observations.

Vimiero stands at the bottom of a valley, and at the eastern extremity of a ridge of hills, extending westward towards the sea. The river Maceira flows through it—and on the opposite side, heights rise eastward, over which winds the mountain road of Lourinho. In front of the village a plateau of some extent is slightly elevated above the surrounding surface; but it, in turn, is completely overlooked by the heights on either side. The British, never anticipating an attack, had merely taken up ground for the night, with more attention to convenience than security. Six brigades occupied the high ground westward of Vimiero. One battalion, the 50th, with some rifle companies, were bivouacked on the plateau, having a half brigade of nines, and a half brigade of six pounders. The eastern heights were occupied by pickets only, as water could not be procured in the vicinity — and in the valley the cavalry

and reserve artillery had taken their ground for the night.

The communication immediately made by Sir Arthur Wellesley to his senior officer, Sir Harry Burrard, both of the past and the intended operations, had been unfavourably received. Sir Harry declined the daring but judicious step of an immediate advance on Mafra, by which the position taken by the French on the heights of Torres Vedras must have been necessarily turned. In fact, to every suggestion of Sir Arthur he raised continuous objections, and seemed totally opposed to any forward movement. He pleaded, in apology for inaction, that the cavalry was weak—the artillery badly horsed;—that a march, which should remove the British from their shipping, would interrupt their supplies and endanger the army; and the best of the bad reasons which he gave, was the expected arrival of Sir John Moore with a strong reinforcement. It was useless in Sir Arthur Wellesley to point out, as he did, the advantages of an advance, with an assurance, which proved true, that if they did not, the French would become assailants. Sir Harry appeared to have formed a stubborn resolution of remaining quiet that no argument or remonstrance could disturb—and Sir Arthur Wellesley returned to his camp, convinced that the military incapacity of his superior officer would, when it paralyzed early success as it did

that of Rolica, entail upon the expedition ulterior disaster and disgrace. It was otherwise decreed — and the decision of an enemy wreathed the laurel on Wellesley's brow, of which the timidity of a feeble-minded colleague would have robbed him.

Delaborde had executed his orders to check the advance of the British with a zeal and ability that added greatly to his military reputation. Junot, in the interim, was actively engaged in concentrating his brigades, and drawing every disposable man from his garrisons, to enable him to bring a force to bear against the British, that, from its superior formation, must ensure success. His whole corps was formed into two divisions; Delaborde commanding one, and Loison the other—while the reserve, composed entirely of grenadiers, was entrusted to Kellerman. All his dispositions having been completed, the Duke of Abrantes advanced to Vimiero, where he had ascertained that his enemy was halted.

Sir Arthur was awakened at midnight by a German officer in charge of the outlying picket, with the intelligence of Junot's movements, and an assurance that an attack was certain, as the French advance was not above a league distant. Patrols were immediately sent out; and while every care was taken against surprise, the line was not alarmed, nor the men permitted to be disturbed.

Junot quitted his position on the evening of the 20th, and marched all night by roads bad in themselves, and interrupted by numerous defiles; consequently great delay occurred, and it was seven o'clock next morning, when he arrived within four miles of the British outposts. The formation of his columns was effected unseen, as the broken ground, behind which he made his dispositions, entirely concealed his movements. The first intimation of a serious attack, was only given, when a mass of Junot's cavalry deployed in front of the picket that was observing the Lourinho road. Perceiving instantly the point on which the French were about to direct their column, Sir Arthur crossed the ravine with the brigades of Ferguson, Nightingale, Aucland, and Bowes, thus securing his weakest point, the left, before Junot had made a demonstration against it.

Presently the French columns came on; the right by the Lourinho road, and the left marching on the plateau, occupied by the 50th and rifles. The onset of both divisions was made with their usual impetuosity, and in both the British skirmishers were driven in.

The British right was furiously attacked. Unchecked by the light troops covering the line, the French came boldly forward, until it found itself directly in front of the 36th, 40th, and 71st. It deployed instantly, and several

volleys of musketry were mutually returned, and at a distance so close as to render the effect murderous. But the fusilade was ended quickly; the 82nd and 29th pushed on, and joined their comrades when pressed by an enormous superiority. "Charge!" was the order; and a cheer, "loud, regular, and appalling," announced that England was coming on.

The French stood manfully; but though they waited the onset, they could not withstand it. They were driven from the field—a vain attempt to rally, when the 71st and 82nd had flung themselves on the ground to recover breath, failed—and six guns were taken. The front rank of the French division was literally annihilated—it lay as it had fallen—and told with what determination it had stood, and the desperation with which it had been assaulted.

On the left, the French column having pushed the rifles before it, advanced upon the 50th formed in line. The regiment was strong, numbering about nine hundred bayonets, and supported by a half brigade of guns; and though the French had seven pieces with their column, it suffered heavily from the British cannonade. The enemy's advance was made in close order of half battalions. Sheltered from the fire of the artillery, the French halted behind a broken hillock, closed up their ranks, and ad-

vanced to the attack. The 50th remained until this moment with "ordered arms." With excellent judgment, the Colonel, leaving the left wing of his regiment in line, threw his right into echelons of companies, and ordered it to form line upon the left. But there was not time to complete the formation, as the enemy came on, opening a hot but inefficient fire from its flanks. Part of the right wing of the 50th bore directly on the angle of the advancing column—and when within twenty paces, the order was given to fire, and to "charge!" succeeded. Broken totally by the close discharge, the angle of the column forced itself on the centre; all was instantly disorganised, and the artillery cutting their traces, added to the confusion. The British pressed on —the French got mobbed—and assisted by part of the 20th light dragoons, a column five times numerically superior, were for two miles fairly driven from their ground by one regiment, until relieved by the French cavalry reserve, which came up in a force not to be resisted.

While these more important operations were repulsed, the town of Vimiero was attacked by a lesser column (Kellerman's reserve), that had flanked the larger, and the 43rd regiment furiously assailed. One company occupied the church-yard, another held some houses that covered the road by which the French attack was made; and the fire of both was so destructive, that the column

was repelled with immense slaughter. On the extreme left, the 97th and 52nd repulsed Delaborde with considerable loss; on every point the attack failed, and the field was won.

No troops fought better than the French—no battle was more determinately contested. The enemy's reserve "performed prodigies of valour, advancing under a cross fire of musketry and cannon, and never giving way until the bayonets of the British troops drove them down the descent."* But they were routed on every side; and, with relation to the numbers engaged, the slaughter was terrific. Upward of three thousand Frenchmen were killed and wounded, and a number of prisoners made—while the British loss was computed, in killed, wounded, and missing, at seven hundred and eighty-three.

One casualty was sincerely deplored. In leading a squadron of the 20th, Lieutenant-colonel Taylor was killed. He had charged the broken infantry of Kellerman, and committed sad havoc among the *élite* of the reserve, when, surrounded by a whole brigade of French cavalry, he fell in the *mêlée*, shot through the heart.

Sir Harry Burrard had landed after the battle commenced, and very prudently left the termination of the contest in his hands by whom the first dispositions had been made. Sir Harry was not in time to assist in the victory—but he had

* French account.

ample leisure to mar its results. Wellesley urged that this was the moment to advance, push on to Torres Vedras, place Junot between two fires, and oblige him to begin a retreat of immense difficulty by Alenquer and Villa Franca. All was admirably prepared for the movement. The supply of ammunition was sufficient, provisions were abundant, and the troops in high courage and superb discipline. The French, on the contrary, were depressed by an unexpected defeat; and, greatly disorganized and wearied by long marches, were certain of being materially inconvenienced by an immediate advance of the British.

But Sir Harry was immoveable. He had made his mind up to await the arrival of Sir John Moore before he should advance a step from Vimiero. A victory had been gained — a complete and brilliant victory. But what was that to him? "The cavalry," he said, "were certainly not strengthened, nor the artillery horses improved, by the exertions they had undergone." Stop he would — and Junot was permitted to return without annoyance; and the British, who should have never halted until they had reached Lisbon, rested on the ground they won.

Is it not inconceivable, that Britain should have consigned her armies to the leading of antiquated tacticians, bigoted in old-world notions, and who would scarcely venture beyond a

second bridge, without spending half the day in reconnoitring? But such things were — and the energies of the first military people in the world were paralyzed for half a century by commands being intrusted to men, who, in cases of ordinary embarrassment, would have been found incompetent to extricate a regiment from a difficulty. But such things were!

CAMPAIGN OF SIR JOHN MOORE.

Burrard succeeded by Dalrymple. — Sir Arthur Wellesley returns home. — British army reinforced. — Sir John Moore appointed to the command in chief — Assembles his army at Villa Vicosa — Advances. — Spanish armies defeated.—Fall of Madrid.—Prepares to attack Soult.—Affair of Sahagun.—Retreat commences. — Narrative of its occurrences.—Battle of Corunna. — Death and character of Sir John Moore. — Troops return to England.

A PERIOD of inaction succeeded the victory at Vimiero. Burrard was superseded in his command by Sir Hew Dalrymple—and the convention of Cintra perfected, by which an army was restored to France, that, had Sir Arthur Wellesley's advice been attended to, must have been eventually destroyed, or driven into such extremity as should have produced an unconditional surrender. Other articles, in this disgraceful treaty, recognised a full exercise of rights of conquest to the French—secured to them the enormous plunder their rapacity had accumulated—and granted an amnesty to every traitor who had abandoned his country, and aided the invaders in effecting its subjugation. No wonder that this precious convention occasioned in England a uni-

versal feeling of disgust. No wonder that blood spilled in vain, and treasure uselessly wasted,* roused popular indignation to a pitch of excitement which no occurrence in modern history can parallel.

The particulars of the treaty of Cintra, immediately on being known in England, occasioned the recal of Sir Hew Dalrymple; and, under the plea of ill health, his colleague, Sir Harry Burrard, resigned and returned home. What a different result the Portuguese campaign would have exhibited, had these two old gentlemen been left in a district command, and not been allowed to check a career of victory which opened with such glorious promise.

Sir Arthur Wellesley had already returned to England, and many officers of all ranks followed his example. The command of the army devolved on Sir John Moore, a man most deservedly respected by the country, and popular with his soldiers.

* Within twelve months from the commencement of the war she sent over to the Spanish armies (besides 2,000,000*l.*) 150 pieces of field artillery, 42,000 rounds of ammunition, 200,000 muskets, 61,000 swords, 79,000 pikes, 23,000,000 ball cartridges, 6,000,000 leaden balls, 15,000 barrels of gunpowder, 92,000 suits of clothing, 356,000 sets of accoutrements and pouches, 310,000 pairs of shoes, 37,000 pairs of boots, 40,000 tents, 250,000 yards of cloth, 10,000 sets of camp equipage, 118,000 yards of linen, 50,000 great coats, 50,000 canteens, 54,000 havresacks, with a variety of other stores, far too numerous to be recapitulated.—*Jones's Account of the War.*

Meanwhile, the general indication of national resistance to French oppression on the part of the Spaniards, encouraged hopes that, if assisted by England, the independence of the Peninsula might be restored. This was a consideration worthy of a statesman's serious regard in both France and Britain, for the thraldom or independence of Spain was an object of vital importance. As to what might be expected from the Spaniards themselves in any attempt made for their liberation, their invaders and their allies seemed to have formed an erroneous estimate—the English overrating the importance of their exertions in the field, as much as the French undervalued that patriotic impulse which had wakened up the slumbering spirit of the people. The British cabinet, however, determined to foster this national feeling—and by munificent supplies, and the presence of an English army, stimulate the Spanish people to assert their lost liberty, and fling off a yoke no longer tolerable. For this purpose a force of twenty thousand men was directed to be assembled at Valladolid—and a reinforcement of thirteen thousand, under Sir David Baird, was despatched from England to join them—the whole to be placed under the orders of Sir John Moore.

Although Sir David's corps was landed by the middle of October, the army of Lisbon was not in a condition to move until the end of the month—and then, under a false belief that the

direct rout to Salamanca was impracticable for the passage of artillery, the batteries and cavalry, with a protecting brigade of three thousand infantry, were moved by Badajoz and the Escurial, entailing on them an additional march of upwards of one hundred and fifty miles. Worse still, a delay in commencing operations was unavoidable, and that was attended with the worst results.

The whole of Sir John Hope's corps having been at last collected, and the cavalry assembled at Villa Vicosa, the order to move forward was given. On the 5th of November Sir John Moore was at Atalia, on the 8th he reached Almeida, and on the 11th his advanced guard crossed the rivulet that divides Spain from Portugal, and entered Cuidad Rodrigo. At San Martin he slept in the house of the curé, and occupied the same bed that had the former year been assigned to Junot and Loison on their respective marches—and on the 13th he entered Salamanca.

There disastrous news awaited him, and one of his supporting armies was already *hors de combat.* Count Belvidere, having made an absurd movement on Burgos, was attacked by a superior force, and his raw levies completely routed; while previously Blake's army had been utterly dispersed, and the magazines at Reynosa taken. To add to this mass of evil tidings, intelligence arrived that the fall of Madrid might be confidently expected,—while, instead of his advance into Spain being

covered with an army of seventy thousand men, Moore found himself in an open town without a gun, without a Spanish picket, with only three infantry brigades, and the French outposts but three marches distant.

Madrid fell—the news could not be credited, and it was asserted that, though the Retiro was taken, the town held obstinately out. The inaction of the British was generally censured; the envoy had remonstrated on the subject, and the army did not conceal their impatience. Influenced by these considerations, Moore determined to make a diversion on the capital, and attack Soult, who was at Saldanha on the Carion. A forward movement ensued, Baird was directed to march from Astorga, and Romana was informed of the intended operation, and requested to assist.

This decision of attacking Soult was known to the army, and gave general satisfaction.* On the 16th, head quarters were at Toro—and passing

* "The British General advanced unaided by or in communication with any Spanish force, except the remains of the army of the left, under the Marquis de la Romana, who continued to occupy Leon with that weak and inefficient force;—this, with about five thousand Asturian recruits under General Ballisteros, that had not yet been engaged, being the only Spanish force now in the field in the whole north of Spain. Sir John Moore had no friendly corps to protect his flanks—no reinforcements to expect. He commanded an army brilliant in appearance, yet weak in numerical strength; but upon that, and that alone, was dependence to be placed for the successful result of a very bold advance."—*Lord Londonderry.*

Villapondo and Valderosa, on the 20th, Sir John reached Majorga, and was joined by Baird's division, making a united force of twenty-three thousand five hundred infantry, two thousand four hundred cavalry, and, including a brigade of three-pounders—from its small calibre perfectly useless, —an artillery of nearly fifty guns. Soult's corps amounted to sixteen thousand infantry and twelve hundred dragoons. The great portion of the former were at Saldanha—and Debelle's cavalry at Sahagun.

While thus advancing, the brilliant affair between Lord Paget and the French cavalry shed a passing glory on a series of operations, whose results were generally so calamitous. We shall give the affair in the words of the noble Colonel of the 10th Hussars, than whom, on that occasion, no one "by daring deed" more effectually contributed to victory.

"The Monastero Melgar Abaxo is distant about three leagues from Sahagun, in which place a corps of seven hundred French cavalry were reported to be lodged. As they were at some distance from the main body of the French army, it was deemed practicable to cut them off, and Lord Paget determined, at all events, to make the attempt. He accordingly put himself at the head of the 10th and 15th Hussars, and in the middle of a cold wintry night, when the direct rout to Salamanca was impracticable, for

the ground was covered with snow, set off for that purpose.

When they had ridden about two thirds of the way, Lord Paget divided his force, and desiring General Slade, with the 10th, to pursue the course of the Cea, and to enter the town by that side, he himself, followed by the 15th, wheeled off to approach it by a different rout. It was not long before his lordship's party fell in with a picket of the enemy; and all, except one man, were either cut down or made prisoners. But the escape of one was as injurious, under existing circumstances, as the escape of the whole; for the alarm was given, and before the 15th could reach the place, the enemy were ready to receive them. It was now broad daylight, and as our troops drew near, the French were soon formed in what appeared to be an open plain, at no great distance from the town. The 15th were wheeled into line in a moment, and as there was no time to be lost, they followed their leader at a brisk trot, with the intention of charging; but when they were yet fifty yards from the enemy, they found that a wide ditch divided them, and that the French had availed themselves of other inequalities in the ground, of which, when some way off, they had not been aware. A pause was now necessarily made, but one instant served to put the whole again in motion. The regiment, wheeling to its left, soon found a convenient place for

crossing; and though the enemy manœuvred actively to hinder the formation, they were again in line, and advancing to the charge, within five minutes from the commencement of the check. A few changes of ground now took place, as each corps strove to gain the flank of the other, but they were only a few. The British cavalry effected its object—and then coming down at full speed upon their opponents, who stood to receive the shock, they overthew them in an instant. Many were killed upon the spot, many more unhorsed, and one hundred and fifty-seven were made prisoners, including two Lieutenant-colonels. On this occasion the English cavalry amounted only to four hundred men, whilst that of the French fell not short of seven hundred."

The weather continued bad; the troops were a good deal knocked up by forced marching, and Sir John halted on the 22nd and 23rd for supplies, intending by a night march to reach the Carion, and attack Soult on the morrow. Every account made the British numerically greater than the enemy — and though the French had been reinforced, still Moore's army was stronger by fully five thousand men.

The dispositions were made for attack — at eight at night the army were to move in two columns—and the right, which was to force the bridge and penetrate to Saldanha, was getting under arms, when couriers arrived "loaded with

heavy tidings." The French were moving in all directions to cut the English off;* the corps which had been marching south, was suddenly halted at Talavera; two strong divisions were moving from Placentia; the Badajoz army in full march on Salamanca—and Napoleon himself in the field, determined, as it was reported, to "sweep the British before him to the ocean."

This was, in truth, disastrous intelligence. The orders to advance were countermanded instantly—the troops, which had already been mustering, were retired to their quarters, and the object of the expedition virtually ended. The campaign was indeed a tissue of mistakes—"operating with feeble allies acting on false information, advancing to-day, retiring to-morrow, with everything to harass and nothing to excite the soldier, until at last the ill-fated and ill-planned expedition terminated in a ruinous retreat."†

In making preparations for a rapid march before an enemy, that from report was overwhelm-

* The situation of the several corps of the French army, when Sir John Moore advanced from Salamanca, was as follows:—The Duke of Dalmatia at Sahagun, Saldanha, and the villages in that neighbourhood on the river Carion; Marshal the Duke of Treviso moving upon Zaragosa; the Duke of Abrantes with eight corps at Vittoria; Marshal Lefebre with the fourth corps beyond the Guadarama; Marshal Lasnes upon the Ebro; and the Emperor Napoleon, with the Imperial Guard, the first and sixth corps *d'armée* at Madrid.

† "The Bivouac."

ing if not avoided, the 23rd of December was consumed, and the general plan for regressive operations was arranged by instantly retreating on Gallicia.

To pass the Esla, three routs were open,—one by the bridge of Mansilla, a second by the ferry of Valencia, and a third by the bridge of Castro Gonsalo, over which the great road to Benevente leads. Mansilla was occupied and exhausted by the Spanish army, and the roads of Valencia and Gonsalo afforded the best retreat. A double means of retirement would expedite the movements — and neither the magazines at Lamora nor Benevente would be left to the French. Astorga was named the point of union, as there, if pressed, battle would be offered. Romana was requested to move upon Leon, after holding, to the last extremity, the bridge of Mansilla.

All arrangements being completed, Moore commenced retiring on the 24th—Hope's division fell back on Castro Gonzalo, and Baird's on Valencia; while cavalry patrols were pushed forward on the Carion, with orders to retire at nightfall of the 25th, giving the reserve and light infantry, which formed the rear-guard, a start of some three or four hours in advance. All was admirably executed, and the columns, unmolested, reached their respective destinations.

The retreat continued, marked by some occasional affairs between the cavalry of the ad-

vanced and rear guard, which terminated invariably in favour of the latter. The hussar regiments behaved most nobly—and on every occasion, regardless of numbers, or the more discouraging movements of retreat, they sought a combat, and always came off the conquerors.

The infantry already began to experience the annoyance of long marches, severe weather, and a very indifferent commissariate. To march over cut-up roads, and through an exhausted country, where no friendly place of strength protects, no well-supplied magazine refreshes, soon harasses the over-loaded soldier. But that accomplished in the dead of winter, — in cold and darkness, and sleet and rain, — was enough to have subdued the spirit of any army but a British one, retiring under every privation, and with seventy thousand veteran troops marching on their flanks and rear.

The army reached Benevente on the 27th—and the crossing of the Esla,* though exceedingly troublesome, was effected with inconsiderable loss.

* "Early next day our sufferings opened with the crossing of the Esla. The river was already rising, and one huge and ill-constructed ferry-boat was the only means by which to pass over a whole division, its baggage and its camp followers. The waters were increasing, the rain fell in torrents, the east wind blew with cutting violence, mules kicked, men cursed, and women screamed; all, in short, was noise and disorder. Fortunately a contiguous ford was declared practicable. The infantry and their equipages passed safely; and before the flood rose so high as to bar their passage, the whole column were safe upon the right bank."—*The Bivouac.*

The roads were wretched, the weather bad, and the French pursuit marked by the fiery character of their emperor. He crossed* the Carpenteras, regardless of obstacles that would have discouraged the boldest—and, in a hurricane of sleet and hail, passed his army over the Guadarama, by a rout declared impracticable even to a mountain peasant.

This bold operation, worthy of the conqueror of Italy, was followed up by an immediate advance. On the 26th the main body of the British continued retreating on Astorga,—the bridge

* "The difficulties were such, that the artillery preceding the column of infantry gave up the point, and were returning down the southern ascent of the Guadarama mountain when met by the Emperor. This retrograde movement was occasioned by the increased violence of a hurricane blowing hail and snow with, it was considered, resistless force. In addition to the report of his officers, the Spanish peasants declared the passage to be attended with the greatest danger.

"Napoleon ordered his troops to follow him, and immediately proceeded to place himself at the head of the column. Accompanied by the *chasseurs à cheval* of the guard, he passed through the ranks of the infantry, then formed the chasseurs in close column, occupying the entire width of the road; then, dismounting from his horse, and directing the rear of the leading half squadron, the whole moved forward. The men, by being dismounted, were, with the exception of those immediately in front, more sheltered from the storm, while the dense mass trod down the snow, and left a beaten track for the infantry, who, no longer obstructed in the same degree, and inspired by the presence as well as the example of Napoleon, pushed forward, and the whole descended to Espinar."—*Leith Hay.*

across the Esla was destroyed — and the night of the 27th passed over in tolerable quiet. In the morning, however, the French were seen actively employed.. Five hundred cavalry of the guard tried for the ford above the ruined bridge, found it, and passed over. The pickets forming the rear-guard at once confronted them, — and, led on by Colonel Otway, charged repeatedly, and checked the leading squadron. General Stuart put himself at the head of the pickets, while Lord Anglesea rode back to bring up the 10th. Charges were made on both sides; the pickets gave ground—the French advanced, but the 10th were speedily at hand, and came forward. The pickets rallied,—they cheered and cut boldly in at speed. The French were overthrown and driven across the river, with the loss of their Colonel (Le Fevre), and seventy officers and men.

This brilliant encounter had the results that boldness wins. The French kept a respectful distance, and thus, the column was enabled to gain Astorga without any molestation.

But the danger was momently increasing. From prisoners taken in the cavalry affair on the Esla, it was ascertained that, on the preceding evening, the head-quarters of Napoleon's own corps were but sixteen miles from the bivouacs of the British. To reach Villa Franca before the French was imperatively necessary. On

that event how much depended, — for on the possession of that road, in a great degree, would rest the safety or destruction of the British, as it opens through a defile into a country that for miles renders cavalry movements impracticable, and entirely protects the flanks of a retiring army.

It is astonishing how quickly a retreat in bad weather destroys the formation of the best army. The British divisions had marched from Sabugal on the 24th in the highest order; on the 30th, on reaching Astorga, their disorganization had commenced — they seemed a mob flying from a victorious enemy, and General Moore himself exhibited a despondency that was apparent to all around him. "That he was an officer of great distinction every one acknowledged during his life, and posterity will never deny it; but it was too manifest that a fear of responsibility, a dread of doing that which was wrong, of running himself and his troops into difficulties from which they might not be able to extricate themselves, were a great deal too active to permit either his talents or his judgment properly to exert their influence. Sir John Moore had earned the highest reputation as a general of division; he was aware of this, and perhaps felt no inclination to risk it; at all events he was clearly incapable of despising partial obstacles in the pursuit of some great ultimate advantage;—in one word, he was

not a Wellington. Of this no more convincing proof need be given than the fact that, even at the moment when the preparations for the brief advance were going on, his whole heart and soul seemed turned towards the Portuguese frontier."*

Romana had unfortunately given up the Leon rout, and marching on Astorga, encumbered the roads with the ruins of his baggage, and worse still, filled the villages he passed through with crowds of ragged followers unable to get on, some from absolute decrepitude and want, and more from being attacked by fever of the worst type.

The retreat was renewed next morning, and the marching continued with such constancy that, by abandoning the sick and wounded, wasting the ammunition and destroying the stores, the British outstripped pursuit, and on the 3rd of January found themselves in comparative safety. The cavalry, as usual, distinguished themselves; and at Cacabelos, where the rear guard was overtaken, behaving with their customary *esprit*, they repelled the advance of the French hussars, and prevented the light troops from being surrounded and cut off. Indeed the escape of the rifles was wonderful. They were retreating through the

* This sketch of Moore by Lord Londonderry displays his character in all its valuable and defective lights, as an officer, so strongly, that no minuter description probably could exceed it in point, and none certainly in fidelity.

town, and part of the rear guard had already crossed the bridge, when the French cavalry came suddenly on in overwhelming force, and galloping into the rear companies of the 95th, succeeded in making some prisoners. The rifles instantly broke into skirmishing order, and commenced retiring up the hill, when a body of voltigeurs rushed to the support of the cavalry, and the affair became serious. The 95th, however, had now thrown themselves into the vineyards behind the town, and kept up a rapid and well-directed fire. The French attempted to get in their rear, and charged boldly up the road, led on by General Colbert. But the fusilade from the vineyard was maintained with such precision that the French were driven back, leaving a number of dead on the field, among whom their brave and daring leader was included.

Sir John was also threatened with attack at Villa Franca. A strong column of infantry appeared on the heights, in full march on that division which was in position on the opposite hill. The artillery opened, and an engagement appeared inevitable. But checked by the cannonade, the forward movement of the French was arrested; and Sir John, anxious to reach the better position of Lugo, continued his retreat, and prudently avoided coming to a general action, where the ground had no military advantage to induce him to risk a combat. The main body marched

to Herrieras, the reserve to Villa Franca, and the rear guard moved at ten o'clock, and reached its bivouac at midnight.

The cavalry, no longer serviceable in a country rough, hilly, and wooded, with numerous enclosures around vineyards and plantations of mulberry-trees, were sent on to Lugo; the infantry and artillery marching for the same place. During the whole day and night that distressing movement was executed, and forty miles were passed over roads on every side broken up, and in places, knee-deep. Never will that dreadful march be forgotten by those that witnessed it. The men dropped down by whole sections on the wayside and died, some with curses, some with the voice of prayer in their mouths. The women and children, of whom an immense number had injudiciously been allowed to accompany the army, shared a similar fate. Horrible scenes momentarily occurred, — children frozen in their mothers' arms, women taken in labour, and, of course, perishing with their ill-fated infants. Some were trying by the madness of intoxication to stimulate their worn-out frames to fresh exertion, or, when totally exhausted, to stupify the agonies of the slow but certain death that cold and hunger must inevitably produce before another sun dawned. It was awful to observe the different modes, when abandoned to die, in which the miserable wretches met their fate. Some lay down in sullen compo-

sure — others vented their despair in oaths, and groans, and curses — and not a few in heart-rending prayers to heaven, that the duration of their sufferings might be abridged.

From an early period of the retreat the discipline of the troops was shaken by rapid movements, and an absence of regular supplies. Hence, the men were obliged to shift as they best could, — and this laxity gradually increased, and ended in frequent scenes of drunkenness, rioting, and robbery. Every town and village was sacked in search of food, the wine stores plundered, and the casks, in mere wantonness, broken and spilled. Nothing could check the licentious spirit of the troops; and when a man was hanged at Benivedre, even that sad example had not the least effect, for many of the marauders were detected in the act of plundering within sight of the fatal tree.

During this distressing movement, the French had pressed the British rear guard closely, and a constant scene of skirmishing ensued. Though invariably checked by the light troops, still the army was hourly becoming less effective; every league reducing it both in numbers and resources. Quantities of arms and necessaries were abandoned or destroyed; and two bullock carts loaded with dollars were thrown over a precipice into the bed of a mountain torrent. All this proved how desperately reduced that once fine and well-appointed

army had become. Indeed its appearance was rather like a procession of maimed invalids, with a caravan of sick soldiers, than an army operating in front of a determined enemy, and expecting momently to come to action.

It was a matter of surprise to all that the French leader did not force on an engagement; but, on the contrary, Soult followed this half-ruined army with a caution that appeared unnecessary. Still the moment of attack could not be distant; and it was certain that the Marshal only waited for some embarrassment in the march to throw his leading divisions on the retreating brigades of England, and force on a decisive battle.

This event was particularly to be dreaded while passing the bridge and village of Constantino. A long and difficult mountain road leads to the summit of a bold height, down which it winds again by a gradual descent till it meets the bridge. The occupation of this height, before the columns had passed the river, would expose them to a heavy fire; and Sir John Moore determined to check the French pursuit, and hold the hill, until the rear of the main division had cleared the bridge and village. His dispositions were quickly made,—the 28th regiment and rifle corps were drawn up beside the river, and the 20th, 52nd, and 91st on a hill immediately in their rear, flanked by the horse artillery.

The French attacked with their usual spirit.

The cavalry and tirailleurs advanced against the bridge; but the fire from the British riflemen, assisted by the guns on the height, drove them back with loss. A second and a third attack, made with equal boldness, ended in a similar result. Darkness put a stop to the fighting. The French withdrew their light troops, the British continued to retreat, and before morning broke the rear guard joined the army, now bivouacked in position, or cantoned in and around the town of Lugo.

"The concentration of so many troops at this wretched place produced a scene of hurry and confusion with which the distant cannonade at the bridge of Constantino seemed in perfect keeping.

"On one side was to be seen the soldier of every rank who had secured a habitation to shelter him, but whom duty or inclination occasioned to wander through the crowds of people, and deeply mudded streets of the town; on the other, the disconsolate person that made his appearance after the Alcalde's ingenuity had been stretched to the uttermost in procuring quarters for the troops already arrived, and whose *personal friends* had been subjected to the unusual order for admitting strangers. The pitiableness of his case was either to be discovered by a resigned and woeful visage, or by certain ebullitions of temper, destined to waste themselves in the desert air. Next were to be seen the conductors of baggage,

toiling through the streets, their laden mules almost sinking under the weight of ill-arranged burdens swinging from side to side, while the persons in whose charge they had followed the divisions appeared undecided which to execrate most, the roads, the mules, the Spaniards, or the weather. These were succeeded by the dull, heavy sound of the passing artillery; then came the Spanish fugitives from the desolating line of the armies. Detachments with sick or lamed horses scrambled through the mud, while, at intervals, the report of a horse-pistol knelled the termination to the sufferings of an animal that a few days previously, full of life and high in blood, had borne its rider not against, but over, the ranks of Gallic chivalry. The effect of this scene was rendered more striking by the distant report of cannon and musketry, and more gloomy by torrents of rain, and a degree of cold worthy of a Polish winter."*

Preparations were made for a battle, and Sir John Moore seemed determined to retreat no further. Notwithstanding the British were suffering from cold, and wet, and hunger, they fell into their position with alacrity. The Minho protected their right, and a ravine separated them from the French, who, already in force, occupied the heights, and were evidently preparing for an immediate effort.

* Leith Hay.

On the 6th the French deployed upon the heights, and the British stood to their arms. Some hours passed; each line looked at the other, as if waiting for its opening movement. The day passed,—and at night the hostile armies occupied the same bivouacs on which their brigades had rested the preceding evening.

The 7th came: with the first dawn, as if to make up for its previous inactivity, the French guns opened. Their battery was but weak, and the fire of the British artillery silenced it. A pause ensued,—the day wore on—the evening was closing,—when a column of considerable strength, covered by a cloud of tirailleurs, steadily mounted the hill, driving in the pickets and a wing of the 76th. The 51st was instantly moved to its assistance, musketry was interchanged, a bayonet rush succeeded, the French were driven down the hill, and operations terminated.

"Darkness came on,—a wild and stormy night,—a lonely hill,—no fire, no food,—such was the bivouac of Lugo;—such the wretched and cheerless situation of the harassed but unconquerable islanders.

"As the morning of the 8th dawned, the British formed line, and prepared coolly for the expected encounter; but it passed over, and the enemy made no hostile movement. The troops had been ordered to bivouac as they best could, and in a short time a number of rude huts were erected

to defend them from the inclemency of the coming night. But it was not intended to remain longer before Lugo. When darkness hid their retreat, the British filed off silently by the rear. Through a frightful storm of hail and wind, their march was bravely executed; and leaving Lugo and Valmela behind them, they halted at Betanzos on the 10th."*

Here the exhausted soldiery were halted from sheer necessity. They were literally marched to a stand-still,—and although the rain fell in torrents, they lay down upon the soaked earth, and in that comfortless situation remained until at evening the ranks were again formed, and the retreat continued on Corunna, where Sir John had now decided on embarking the ruins of his army.

Fortunately for the wearied troops, the French, deceived by the fires left burning when the British commenced their night march from Lugo, did not discover the movement until daylight, and thus twelve hours were gained on the pursuers. This lost time could not be recovered; and although the whole of the 10th was passed in Betanzos, to allow stragglers to rejoin their regiments, no serious attempt was made to embarrass the remainder of the march, and the leading division reached Corunna at noon on the 11th, while the reserve occupied the adjoining

* "The Bivouac."

villages, and the remaining brigades took their quarters in the suburbs.

Corunna afforded a very indifferent position to offer battle on; there was one, but its extent made it untenable by an army so weak in number as the British. After a close examination, the rising ground about the village of Elvina, a mile in front of the town, was the place selected by the General; the position was accordingly marked out, and the brigades moved to their allotted posts.

A ridge commanded the Betanzos road, and formed the left of the line, and on this General Hope's division was placed. Sir David Baird's was next in station, and occupied a succession of knolls that swept inwards, and inclined to a valley beyond the Vigo road. Over the low ground the rifle corps were extended, appuied upon Frazer's division, which, placed in echellon, covered the principal approach to Corunna. Paget's division was in reserve behind Hope's, and occupied a village half a mile in the rear.

The enemy appeared beyond the Mero while these dispositions were being made; but, with the exception of a partial cannonade, no hostile demonstration occurred. On the 14th the artillery had ceased on both sides; an unusual quiet ensued, and nothing seemed likely to produce any immediate excitement, when the explosion of four thousand barrels of powder burst upon the

astonished ear. It is impossible to describe the effect. The unexpected and tremendous crash seemed for the moment to have deprived every person of reason and recollection; "the soldiers flew to their arms, nor was it until a tremendous column of smoke, ascending from the heights in front, marked from whence the astounding shock proceeded, that reason resumed its sway. It is impossible ever to forget the sublime appearance of the dark dense cloud of smoke that ascended, shooting up gradually like a gigantic tower into the clear blue sky. It appeared fettered in one enormous mass; nor did a particle of dust or vapour, obscuring its form, seem to escape as it rolled upwards in majestic circles."*

On the 15th the fleet hove in sight, and immediate preparations were made to effect an embarkation of the army. The women and children, with the sick and wounded, were directly carried on board, a large portion of the artillery and stores was sent afterwards; and the cavalry, after destroying the few horses that still remained, embarked. None but the infantry, and of these such only as were effective, were now left; and the belief was general, that they too would be permitted to retire from their position unmolested.

Everything on the 16th continued quiet. The boats pulled from the shipping to the beach, and orders were issued for the divisions to move down, and prepare for immediate embarkation; Sir John

* Leith Hay.

Moore was on horseback to visit the outposts, for the last time, before they should be withdrawn, when an officer came up hastily, and announced that the French were under arms. The intelligence was correct; for an instant fusilade commenced between their tirailleurs and the English pickets, as their light troops pushed forward, covering the advance of four compact columns. Two directed their march upon the right, one moved upon the centre, while the fourth threatened the left of the English line.

The right, consisting of the 4th, 42nd, and 50th, supported by the guards, were fiercely attacked, and the reserve ordered to sustain it. The French threw out a cloud of skirmishers, supported by the fire of eleven pieces of artillery,—and driving the advanced posts before them, came forward with their customary boldness. On deploying partially, their line extended considerably beyond the extreme right of the British, but this was disregarded, and instead of waiting the attack, the regiments gallantly advanced to meet it. The 4th suddenly refusing its right wing, shewed a double front,—and unawed by a superior enemy, undaunted by a heavy and well-directed cannonade, the manœuvre of this splendid regiment was executed with all the coolness and precision of a parade.

For a time the irregularity of ground, intersected by numerous enclosures, kept the combatants apart; but these were speedily surmount-

ed, and the French assault made and repelled. The village of Elvina, which had for a few minutes been in possession of the enemy, was recovered by the 50th with the bayonet.*

The action was now general along the line. The 42nd and a battalion of the Guards, by a brilliant charge, drove back the French; and, failing to force, Soult endeavoured to turn the British right, and accordingly marched a column in its rear. That, the reserve attacked, and repulsed it with heavy loss. In every point Soult's attacks failed—and, altering his dispositions, he took ground considerably to the right.

While the 42nd were crossing bayonets, and Sir John Moore was encouraging the charge, a round shot knocked him from his horse, shattering his left arm at the shoulder. Immediately before, Sir David Baird had been wounded and removed. But the fall of their Generals produced no serious results. Corunna was not a battle of manœuvre, but a field of determined resistance. The officers commanding the different battalions fought their regiments gallantly; the dispositions for the engagement were simple and understood; the attempts upon the left and centre were repulsed; and the French, beaten on every point, fell back as night came on.

Thus ended the conflict of Corunna;—and

* In this charge the regiment lost both its Majors; one being killed, and the other wounded and taken prisoner.

when every disadvantage is taken into consideration under which the British fought, its results were glorious, and the courage and coolness displayed throughout, most honourable to the troops employed. The numbers engaged were certainly in favour of the French. Without its light brigade, which had retreated and embarked at Vigo, the British divisions scarcely reached to fifteen thousand; while Soult was reinforced in the morning, and mustered from eighteen to twenty thousand men. The loss on both sides was severe; that of the British amounting to eight hundred killed and wounded, while the French admitted theirs to be at least double that number.

Yet it was but a melancholy triumph. The sad reverses of the retreat, the abandonment of the country, and the death of a brave and beloved commander, clouded the hour of conquest, and threw a depressing gloom around, that seemed fitter to mark a defeat than attend a well-won victory. No attempt was made to follow it up. The brigades were removed after dark, the embarkation continued,* and on the afternoon of the 17th, the whole fleet was under weigh, steering for England with a leading wind.

* "The embarkation going forward had none of the exhilaration attending an operation naturally accompanied with so much activity, life, and spirit; all seemed sombre and depressed; we were flying from the land, which was left in the

The severity of a wound like Sir John Moore's, precluded, from the first moment it was received, all hope of his surviving beyond an hour or two. The arm was torn nearly from the shoulder, and the collar-bone partially carried away; but, notwithstanding the desperate hemorrhage that ensued, the sufferer preserved his recollection, and remained in mental possession to the last.

He was carried from the field in a blanket by six soldiers, who evinced their sympathy by tears; and when a spring waggon came up, and it was proposed that Sir John should be transferred to it, the poor fellows respectfully objected, "as they would keep step, and carry him more easily." Their wishes were attended to, and the dying General was conveyed slowly to his quarters in the town, occasionally stopping the bearers to look back upon the field, whenever an increased firing arrested his attention. All hope was over—he lingered for a little, talking feebly, but collectedly, to those around; and dividing his last thoughts, apparently, between his country and his kindred. The kindliness of his disposition was in death remarkable. Turning to an aid-de-camp, he desired to be remembered

undisturbed possession of troops vanquished on the preceding day, but now preparing to fire the last taunting discharges against soldiers whom fortune appeared to have frowned upon, even in victory."—*Leith Hay.*

to his sister—and feebly pressing Colonel Anderson's hand, his head dropped back, and he died without a struggle.

As a wish had been expressed by the departed, that he should be laid in the field on which he fell, the rampart of the citadel was happily chosen for his "resting-place." A working party of the 9th turned up the earth—and at midnight, wrapped in a cloak and blanket, his uncoffined remains were interred by the officers of his staff,—the burial-service read by torch-light,—earth fell on kindred clay,—the grave was filled,—and, in the poet's words, "They left him alone with his glory."

The benefits derived to an army from the example of a distinguished commander, do not terminate at his death; his virtues live in the recollections of his associates, and his fame remains the strongest incentive to great and glorious actions.* In Sir John Moore this was pointedly true; for in public and private life none was more amiable—none, certainly, more exemplary. But, speaking professionally, one is at this day, astonished at the different estimates then formed of his qualifications as a general. Nearly thirty years have elapsed; time best determines the abilities of men — popular clamour, whether favourable or unfriendly, loses its temporary influence—and the merits or defects

* General Order, Horse-Guards, Feb. 1st, 1809.

of departed greatness can, at an after period, be dispassionately examined and adjudged.

In every private relation, Sir John Moore's character was perfect—and his professional career had always been distinguished. Of no man had higher hopes been formed—and hence, probably, more was expected by his country than either his means or his talents could effect. By one party he was unjustly censured, by another injudiciously praised; and in this ferment of opinion, it is difficult to say whether his military reputation was most endangered by the obloquy of his enemies, or the over-praise of his friends.

Sir John Moore was a brave, high-minded, and accomplished soldier; understood the details of his profession, and laboured assiduously* to carry them into operation. He was an excellent commander *en second*,—but he never could handle masses of men, like Napoleon or Wellington—grapple with difficulties when they unexpectedly occurred—and, when apparently on the verge of defeat, change, by his own resources,

* "He always rose between three and four in the morning, lighted his fire and candle by a lamp," and wrote till breakfast hour. Afterwards, he received commanding officers, transacted business, and then rode out "to view the troops or reconnoitre the country." "His table was plentiful," his guests varying from fourteen to twenty. With these he talked familiarly, drank a few glasses of wine, returned to his orderly business, and was in bed by ten o'clock.

LIEUT GENERAL

SIR JOHN MOORE, K.B.

London, R. Bentley, 1839.

the fortunes of a field, and turn an unpromising morning into an evening of victory. For this he was constitutionally unfitted. He laboured under an excessive sensibility that embarrassed his decisions. A fever of the mind, which robs the judgment of its energy, was frequently apparent; and sentiments and language will be found in every portion of his correspondence,* which, while they indicate an amiable disposition, are sadly out of keeping with that stern sufficiency of thought, that should mark the unhesitating character of a commander. Moore wanted confidence in himself; he was afraid of responsibility; he underrated the qualities of his own troops, and greatly overrated those of his adversary. Yet, let justice be done. He acted under circumstances at once difficult and trying; and he was harassed in being made, in some degree, dependent upon the opinions of others. Lord Londonderry, who does ample justice to the memory of Moore, says, "The British army has produced some abler men; and many, in point of military talent, were and are quite his equals: but it cannot, and perhaps never could, boast of one more beloved, not by his personal friends alone, but by every individual that served under him."

* "*Pray for me,* that I may make right decisions, • • • *I sleep little,*" &c. &c. "*I see my situation,* and nothing can *be worse.*"—*Campaign, &c. in Spain.*

OPERATIONS AND OCCURRENCES FROM THE DEATH OF SIR JOHN MOORE TO THE ARRIVAL OF SIR ARTHUR WELLESLEY.

Consequences of the embarkation.—Wretched position of Spanish affairs.—State of Portugal.—Operations of the French.—General Friere murdered.—Defeat of the Spanish armies.—Siege of Zaragoza.—Operations in Catalonia.—Proceedings at Lisbon.—Arrival of Sir Arthur Wellesley.—State of the allied army.—Soult's dangerous position.

THE immediate consequence of the embarkation, was the surrender of Corunna on the second day from that on which the once proud army of England quitted the coast of Spain. Ferrol soon followed the example—and in both these places an immense supply of stores and ammunition was obtained. All effective resistance was apparently at an end—and French dominion seemed established in Gallicia more strongly than it had ever been before.

In every part of Spain, the cause of freedom appeared hopeless. One campaign was closed, and never did one end more hopelessly;—an unvarying scene of misfortune from the commencement, it seemed to have withered every national feeling

that might have existed in Spanish breasts. Fortresses that should have held out, provisioned, garrisoned, and open to receive supplies from England, surrendered to a weak army, who could not command "a battering gun or siege store within four hundred miles."* In fact, Spanish resistance seemed a mockery. Their military force was now the ruins of Romana's army, and some half-starved fugitives, who occasionally appeared in Estremadura and La Mancha,—while the French had nearly two hundred thousand veteran troops covering the whole country,—and these too, in masses, that set any hostile demonstration at defiance.

Portugal, in its military footing, was nearly on a par with Spain. A British corps, under Sir John Craddock, garrisoned Lisbon—and, that excepted, there were no troops in the kingdom on which the slightest dependance could be placed. The appointment of Marshal Beresford to a chief command, produced in time a wonderful reformation. The English system of drill was successfully introduced, and, before the war ended, the Portuguese, when brigaded with the British, were always respectable in the field, and sometimes absolutely brilliant. At this period, there was but one national force in the least degree formidable to the invaders—and that was the Spanish Guerillas.†

* Colonel Jones. † "Details," &c.

Under such unpromising circumstances, intelligence reached Sir John Craddock, that three French armies were about to move on Portugal; Soult from Gallicia, Lapisse from Salamanca, and Victor from the Tagus. In the vicinity of the latter, Cuesta was endeavouring to organize anew his routed levies: but on his exertions little dependance could be placed; an alarm spread, the garrison of Almeida was withdrawn, the forts on the Tagus dismantled, and every preparation was made to embark the British at Lisbon, and abandon Portugal to her oppressors.

This panic was, however, checked by the preservation of Almeida and Rodrigo, by Sir Robert Wilson's Portuguese, added to some advantages gained by Cuesta's army over the French, under Victor. The British force in Lisbon had also been reinforced—twenty thousand Portuguese taken into the pay of England—and all these things restored, in some degree, a partial confidence.

After the embarkation at Corunna, the French were for a short time inactive. Ney relieved Soult in Gallicia with seventeen thoūsand men, and enabled the latter to advance on Oporto with twenty-four thousand. After garrisoning Vigo and Tuy, he attempted to cross the Minho near its mouth—but, from imperfect means of transport, he was repulsed, and obliged to march up the river, and pass it by the bridge at Orense. This movement, though in the first instance unfavour-

able, had nearly ended in the destruction of Romana; who, being surprised and defeated, saved himself only by some happy accidents from total ruin.

On entering Portugal, the few and ill-disciplined remnants of the Spanish regiments fell back upon the mountain country, General Friere prudently adopting a defensive system, rather than venture a combat, for which he knew well, that his army was utterly unprepared. This determination of the Spanish general was unpopular. Unpractised in the field, without discipline or formation, and blind to the severe lessons taught them by their recent defeats, these raw levies were ardent for action, and clamorous to meet the enemy again. A number of irregulars, who had lately joined, excited this popular delusion—and insisted that, contrary to his own judgment, their general should fight. Friere prudently and steadily refused; and his mutinous soldiers—if such a mob deserve the name—broke into his quarters, treated him with every ignominy, and finally murdered himself and most of his staff.

They immediately elected a British *employée*, Baron Eben, who commanded a Lusitanian brigade, as their commander; and he, unable to control their fancy for fighting, brought them fairly into action at Carvalho de Este. As might have been expected from such ruffian bands, they were completely routed. Like Falstaff, the Baron had brought his "scoundrels where they were well

peppered,"—and many fell victims to their stupidity and presumption, in supposing for a moment, that they could encounter Soult's veteran troops with the slightest prospect of success. Oporto was next besieged, and though the city was garrisoned by twenty thousand men, having two hundred guns mounted on the works, it was stormed on the third day. The usual scenes of military licence, which the usage of war permits after a successful assault, were here fearfully enacted. Soult, however, checked the turbulence of the soldiery after the first burst of fury had subsided; and on the next day, order was generally restored.

Meanwhile the Spanish armies were undergoing a series of disasters,—Cuesta was driven from the southern frontier, after suffering a signal defeat. Victor, following up his success, crossed the Tagus at Almaraz, and threw himself on the Spanish army. The French charge was stoutly withstood—the cavalry driven back—and, in return, Victor's left attacked, and forced for nearly two miles to retire. But it rallied—the Spanish horse, which had been pursuing, suddenly gave way; a panic seized the infantry — the whole broke—threw down their arms, and endeavoured to save themselves by a precipitous flight. No quarter was given — upwards of nine thousand men were bayoneted and cut down—and the Spanish army, totally disorganized, and placed, for every useful purpose, completely *hors de combat.*

The army of La Mancha were not more fortunate in an engagement at Ciudad Real, with Sebastiani. Broken at the first charge, they were hunted off the field, and pursued by the French cavalry to the very base of the Sierra Morena. Their guns and three thousand prisoners, were the trophies of a complete *déroute*. The number of their killed and wounded was immense, for the French followed up their success with unscrupulous severity, cutting down or bayoneting every fugitive that could be overtaken. No wonder that the French Marshals carried terror with their names; and that the overthrow of the Spanish legions alarmed their British allies at Lisbon. Means were adopted for defence, in the event of the French advancing—a corps was stationed at Abrantes, the main body at Leria, and the Portuguese, under Beresford, at Thomar.

Some other operations of moment had occurred in Arragon and Catalonia. In Arragon the reduction of Zaragoza was the next attempt of the French after the fatal fight of Tudela; and there a resistance was unexpectedly given by the inhabitants, that finds no parallel in the annals of war.* Every effort of art and labour was exhausted to render the city one huge fortress; the convent became a barrack; the church an hospital; woman forgot her fears; the monk left the shrine

* "Details," &c.

for the battery; every street was retrenched; every building secured by barricades; and when the external defences were destroyed, and the walls levelled by the besiegers, the contest had to be continued from street to street—and house after house was as obstinately defended, as if upon its occupation the fate of Zaragoza hung. Although hunger exhausted their energies, and pestilence swept the defenders away by thousands, the stern reply to every summons was *guerre a la cuchulo!* At last, when every street was ruined—when forty thousand of every sex and age had perished—twelve thousand wretched men, too much enfeebled to resist, and a ruined heap of shattered buildings, were the dear-earned trophies that fell to the conquerors of Europe.

In Catalonia, for a time, the progress of French conquest was interrupted. St. Cyr, however, advanced with twenty thousand men, and after a spirited resistance, obliged Rosas to surrender. Following up his success, the French General marched, and attacked Vives, who had taken up a strong position, defended by a number of guns. Although St. Cyr was unprovided with cannon, his mountain movement having obliged him to send his artillery to Figueras, he threw himself upon the Spanish lines, broke and dispersed them with great slaughter, and the loss of the whole of their guns. Again, at Llobregat, he brought

the Spanish General to action, and the battle terminated with results as ruinous. Vives was deposed from the command, and Reding succeeded him.

Reding, finding himself in command of thirty thousand men, decided on acting on the offensive, and moved forward with his army. This determination was unfortunate. St. Cyr, availing himself of the great extension of Reding's force, threw himself upon its centre, severed the wings, and destroyed their communication. After vainly endeavouring by re-uniting a portion of his beaten troops to oppose Souham, Reding was overtaken by St. Cyr, near Tarragona — again defeated, his army dispersed, and himself mortally wounded.

Blake succeeded to the chief command on Reding's death; and while a detachment of a thousand French was surprised on the river Cinca by Perena, the Spanish commandant engaged Suchet with credit, and drove him at night-fall from the field. This partial victory roused the drooping spirits of the Spaniards, and Blake moved into Arragon to re-capture Zaragoza from the invaders.

These temporary successes held out little prospect of repelling invading armies, which were expecting an immense addition to their force. In fact, Portugal would have been soon at the mercy of the enemy, and Spain could offer but a feeble resistance, when Sir Arthur Wellesley arrived to

take the chief command—or, as many believed, to witness a second embarkation, and yield Portugal once more to the invaders.

These forebodings were unfounded—nothing was farther from the intention of Sir Arthur than an abandonment of the country. He instantly proceeded to adopt measures that should enable him to take the field, and the army was concentrated, with the exception of Mackenzie's brigade, at Coimbra, and reviewed. The entire numbered twenty-six thousand men, of which, six thousand formed the separate corps under Marshal Beresford. With the Germans, the English brigades mustered about seventeen thousand; the detached corps under Mackenzie, amounting to nearly three thousand, of which one half was cavalry; and a farther augmentation was effected, by brigading one Portugese with every two of the British battalions.

A strong division, Mackenzie's brigades, with Portuguese regiments amounting to twelve thousand men, were posted at Santarem and Abrantes. This corps was intended to secure Lisbon, should Victor prefer marching on the capital by Alentejo, rather than proceed with his army into Andalusia.

In the mean time Soult's position became extremely dangerous.—A British army in his front —bands of Guerillas in his rear; one flank hemmed in by Silviera at Amarante; and the ocean on the

other. But that able Marshal perceived the difficulties of his situation, and deciding at once to secure an open road in his rear, he despatched Delaborde and Loison to recover Amarante. The task was a tedious and doubtful operation; and for twelve days the place was assaulted and maintained.* At last, Soult in person came forward in strength — and Silviera was driven from the bridge over the Tamaga, with the loss of his cannon, and the French retreat for the present secured.

But two courses remained for the Duke of Dalmatia to adopt—to move towards Victor, by circuitous marches on the Tagus—or, what was far more probable, retire from Portugal by the road leading through the Tras os Montes.

* "Details," &c.

PASSAGE OF THE DOURO.

First movements of the Allies.—Affairs with French cavalry and rear-guard.—Passage of the Douro.—Soult's disorderly retreat. — French suffer heavily. — Wellesley moves to the south, and communicates with Cuesta.— Combined movement planned—Cuesta's imbecility mars it.—Victor escapes.

From the moment Sir Arthur Wellesley landed in Portugal the character of the war changed; and, notwithstanding the numerous and discouraging drawbacks upon a bold career, which the obstinacy of the Spaniards and the deficiency of his own means were continually presenting, before the masterly decision of the British general, all obstacles ultimately gave way; and victory, which had hovered doubtingly over many a hard-contested field, at last rested on his banners and wreathed her laurels round his brows.

Never had a triumphant campaign a bolder or a more brilliant opening. On the 7th of May the cavalry brigade, under General Cotton, marched on the Oporto road, followed by the remainder of the army in three divisions; those of Generals Paget and Payne moving towards Vouga; and

the third, under General Hill, advancing on Aveira. The movements were slowly executed to allow Marshal Beresford time to reach his destination, and seize the bridge of Amarante, before a British force should display itself in front of Oporto.

These plans of Sir Arthur Wellesley were ably effected by the officers in command. While Beresford was marching with all expedition on the Upper Douro, Hill, on the night of the 9th, passed a brigade in fishing-boats across the lake, and at dawn of day landed it safely at Ovar, turning the right flank of the French; while Beresford, having joined Wilson, drove Loison's corps to Amarante, and turned their left. Sir Arthur hoped to have taken Franceschi, who commanded the French cavalry division at Abegeria Nova, by surprise; but a country difficult to traverse, and accidental delays in transporting the guns through the pass of Vouga, prolonged the march. When the cavalry, under Cotton, came in sight of the enemy in the morning, they found him perfectly prepared, and in an excellent position—his cavalry in line upon a level plain, their flank resting on a pine wood, occupied by a body of tirailleurs. General Cotton halted and formed in their front—and in this attitude Sir Arthur found the French and his own advanced guard

The infantry having now arrived, the wood was cleared of its sharpshooters, and dispositions made

for bringing the cavalry to action; but Franchesci, though quickly pursued, succeeded in retreating, abandoning the position to the British, and by a night march uniting himself to Mermet, whom he joined at Grijon.

Here Sir Arthur found them on the 11th, posted strongly on some high grounds behind the village, and, to all appearance, determined to hold them. In a rapid survey of the position, the British General perceived that the left could be turned; and although the column never halted, the necessary manœuvres were effected by detaching General Murray on the right from the rear of the advanced-guard, and throwing a Portuguese regiment into a pine wood on the left, to amuse the attention of the enemy, while General Paget threatened them in front. For a short time a heavy firing was maintained, but, on the flank movement being discovered, the French instantly abandoned the position and retreated. The British were as promptly thrown into column again, and the march resumed, as if nothing had happened, and every movement been that of a field-day.

A brilliant cavalry affair succeeded. On topping the heights from which the French had been deforced, their rear was seen retiring in confusion, and General Stuart volunteered to charge with a few troops of hussars that were fortunately at hand. The attack was made in sections.

The British cavalry galloped down the road, overturned all that opposed them, and made above one hundred prisoners. Nothing could check their daring gallantry, until the French infantry were halted on a height commanding the road. Although unable to face the fire of a force so posted as those were who held Carvalhos, the squadrons wheeled boldly to the right, and threatened the left of the enemy. Dreading lest they should be overtaken and outflanked, the French instantly gave up the hill, and continued retiring rapidly.

The march commenced at nine in the morning, and at five the troops halted for the night, having had their advanced—guard almost constantly engaged. This, however, never checked the movement of the columns, and the division occupied the ground the French had left. Sir Arthur supped in the convent of Grijon with his staff. It must have been indeed a busy day with the *religeuse*, for four Generals, Delaborde, Thomieres, Mermet, and Franchesci, had favoured them with their company at breakfast.

All went on favourably; Hill had landed at Ovar — Cameron came up — and both were in communication. Though holding better ground, the enemy had in every attack been driven back. Yet they had fought gallantly, and it was encouraging to British soldiers to find that they had fairly met the best troops in Europe, and as fairly beaten them.

Next morning the march was renewed. Soult avoided any collision, retreated over the Douro, destroyed the bridge, and carried every boat that could swim to the other bank, and there effectually secured them.

This was a critical moment,—in a more dangerous position a British general never found himself. A broad and rapid river separated the allies from the enemy, and no means of passing it could be discovered. Soult might retire unmolested into Gallicia if he pleased, or attack Beresford singly, overpower him by superior force, and enter Beira. Danger often stimulates bravery to startling but successful enterprises; and, in this emergency, Wellesley decided on as bold an effort as modern warfare parallels, — the crossing of the Douro.

It was, indeed, a daring and a perilous attempt; a strong force was on the other bank; the shores were steep and rocky, and the stream three hundred yards across. Every means had been taken by Soult to make the passage impracticable. His generals of brigade were in observation on the banks; every point of passage was defended; while the Marshal satisfied himself that the bridge was utterly destroyed, as he watched from midnight till daybreak the burning pontoons as they went floating down the current. The only practicable plan that seemed left for Sir Arthur to adopt was to employ the shipping, and

land his troops at the débouchement of the Douro; and, in that belief, the French General retired to his head-quarters, from which he could observe the sea, and, as he expected, watch the disembarkation.

Wellesley, aware how dangerously Marshal Beresford was situated, had determined at every hazard to cross the river, and arrangements were instantly made. General Murray was despatched to Avintes to try the ford, and if boats could be found to send them .down the stream, — the Guards, under General Sherbrooke, were detached to attempt the ferry below the town;—while, from the convent of Santo Agostinho, the British Commander directed the main operations in person. A spot was marked on the opposite shore as a favourable place for landing. It was an unfinished building near the bank, and there the troops first passed over were directed to establish themselves until assistance reached them. To cover this landing-place some guns were quietly got into battery in the convent garden. Every preparation was made — and a fortunate accident obtained the means of passage.

A small skiff was discovered hidden in some high rushes, that had concealed it from the French. A few peasants and a Portuguese colonel crossed over, and found some three or four crazy barges, half buried in the mud. These prizes were instantly secured. Three companies

of the Buffs jumped in, accompanied by General Paget. The opposite bank was gained,—the dismantled building garrisoned,—and the barges were returning for a fresh detachment, before the French seemed aware of the attempt, and, as it turned out, when it was too late to repel it.

The enemy came down in great force, but the Buffs held the building they occupied against overwhelming odds. General Paget was wounded—fresh companies were ferried over, and General Hill took charge of the troops. The French came on in columns, but the batteries from the Serra convent annoyed them with a plunging fire, while the troops from the building kept up a well-directed fusilade. Murray, who had found little difficulty, and succeeded in passing his division by the ford, now appeared moving rapidly on the left flank of the French—while Sherbrooke, having obtained some boats, was ferrying the Guards over below the town. Finding himself likely to be turned on either side, Soult hastily retreated by the Amarante road, boldly followed by the British cavalry, and charged repeatedly with most brilliant success. Evening ended the pursuit. The brigades occupied the city, in every place cheered by loud vivas, and most affectionately received by the inhabitants.

The crossing of the Douro was, in military estimation, as bold and well-arranged an operation as any that marked Wellesley's Peninsular

career. The passage of a river in the face of an enemy, with every assistance from pontoons and ferryage, is considered a hazardous undertaking; but, circumstanced as the British Commander was, the thing was generally set down as impracticable, and Soult was unprepared for the attempt. When the news was brought that the enemy was crossing at Villa Nova, he ridiculed the notion, and remained in his quarters until two in the afternoon. He was then obliged precipitately to quit the city; and so suddenly were Wellesley's measures executed, that the dinner prepared for the Duke of Dalmatia, was served up to the British General and his staff. War is, certes, a game of chances; — and little did the French Marshal suppose, when at noon he regulated the *carte* presented by his *maître d'hôtel*, that he was then civilly arranging an excellent repast for his opponent. Yet such was the case. Wellesley succeeded Soult—and within a few hours, the same roof covered the victor and the vanquished.

Nothing could exceed the irregularity of the French retreat. Before they could be persuaded that the passage of the Douro was seriously designed, the British were charging through the suburbs; and, instead of retiring with orderly formation on the advance of the enemy, the French rear-guard got mobbed together on the road, and allowed an opportunity to the cavalry

of their pursuers to act with an audacity and success that the weakness of their squadrons could never have warranted, had not a considerable panic been occasioned by the precipitation with which Soult's divisions were hurried from the city. Night came most opportunely, and ended the pursuit, — enabling the French Marshal to unite himself with Loison, from whom he received the unwelcome intelligence that the bridge of Amarante was destroyed. His situation was now almost desperate; his only line of retreat was by a mountain track; and, by taking it, he was obliged to cross the pass of Ruivans, a long narrow bridge, without a parapet on either side, spanning a frightful precipice. Should this be occupied, — and no doubt Beresford was marching thither,—nothing could save his army. With excellent judgment, Soult abandoned his artillery and baggage, pushed rapidly forward, and, having forced the Portuguese pickets that here and there occupied the mountain passes, he out-marched Silviera by several hours, and halted his rear-guard at Salamonde, to cover the bridges of Saltadon and Porte Nova, while his columns were defiling.

Here he was overtaken and brought to action, on the 16th, by Sir Arthur. Although the position was strong, and the brigade of Guards were the only infantry come up, the British General instantly made his dispositions for attack. The

left was turned by the rifle corps — the Guards advancing boldly in front. After delivering a volley at the head of the column when it showed itself, the French precipitately fled, and, hurrying through the village in their rear, succeeded, under cover of the darkness, in escaping. Some delay in clearing a defile, allowed the horse artillery to come up — and their rapid fire did considerable execution before the crowd of fugitives could get beyond its range.

The next morning's dawn renewed the pursuit; and every turn of the road, cumbered with broken vehicles and deserted baggage, showed how severely the French army had been pressed. The bridge was nearly impassable from dead men and slain horses, laid there in heaps by the grape and cannister of the British guns. Arms, accoutrements, ham-strung mules, guns, tumbrils, knapsacks filled with silver plate, tapestry, and other valuable plunder, were strewn indiscriminately along the line. To add to this scene of waste and suffering, the villages the advancing army entered, were either in a blaze, or already reduced to ashes; for between the French troops and peasantry a deadly war of extermination was carried on — and on both sides, deeds of cruelty were every day perpetrated, that can hardly be credited or described. Indeed, the French retreat through the Gallician mountains was only paralleled by the British on Corunna; with this excep-

tion, that many a straggler from the British columns was saved by the humanity of the Spaniards, while the unhappy Frenchman who lagged but a few hundred yards behind the rear-guard, was butchered by the infuriated peasantry, bent on the work of slaughter, and burning for vengeance on an enemy, who, in his day of conquest and dominion, had taught the lesson of cruelty now practised unrelentingly on himself.

Soult turning from Montalegre towards Orense, and a French corps from Estremadura having moved on Alcantara, induced Sir Arthur Wellesley to discontinue the pursuit. The French Marshal crossed the frontier on the 18th with barely nineteen thousand men—his guns, stores, and baggage abandoned to the conquerors. Ten weeks, perfect in every arm, that army had passed through Orense on its march to Oporto, mustering twenty-six thousand veteran soldiers. A short period had wrought a fearful change, and even the ruins of that once splendid corps were only extricated from total destruction by the admirable tact and unbending *hardiesse* of their brave and gifted leader.

It was indeed full time for the British leader to move southward. Victor, joined by the division of Lapisse, had, after a splendid resistance from a Portuguese corps under Colonel Mayne, forced the passage of the Tagus at Alcantara, and threatened Lisbon. After a few forward move-

ments, learning that Soult was retreating, Victor fell back himself to Merida, detached a division to observe the bridge of Almarez, and fixed his head-quarters at Tonemocha.

By easy marches, Sir Arthur reached the Douro on the 7th. His army was in a bad condition, suffering alike from their past fatigues in Gallicia, and a total want of every necessary and comfort. The country was unable to supply him, and he had no means to procure, by land or water carriage, assistance from his own commissariate. The hospitals were crowded — officers and men without pay, provisions, or even shoes. Still, though disappointed in remittances, and unable to support his army with any regard to their comforts, the troops had the most implicit confidence in their leader, and very justly ascribed the privations they endured to causes over which their General had no control. The spirit of the army was still unbroken — and much as its physical strength might have deteriorated since it marched from Coimbra to attack Soult, its gallantry was undiminished, and its desire to meet the enemy as ardent as it had ever been.

Spanish affairs, considered generally, had also assumed a more favourable appearance; and although the French force in Spain was still immense, there being within the Pyrenees one hundred and fifty thousand men, the reverses Napoleon had encountered at Wagram, and

the threatening aspect of affairs in Germany, precluded any chance that his lieutenants on the Peninsula would be further reinforced. Hence a spirit of reaction was encouraged in the Spaniards, accompanied by a reasonable prospect of success.

On reaching Abrantes on the 7th, it was correctly ascertained that, instead of retiring on Madrid, Victor was concentrating at Merida, intending probably to cross the Guadiana, and attack Cuesta before the British could come to his assistance. Propositions for a combined movement were made by Sir Arthur Wellesley to the "Spanish General," and willingly acceded to, and the British moved forward to the Teitar, to unite, as it was believed, in an operation on Madrid.

A most able plan for marching at once for the recovery of the capital, was arranged at a conference between the allied commanders.* The British and Spanish armies, taking the right bank of the Tagus, were to advance directly forward. Venegas, with fourteen thousand Spaniards, was to threaten Aranjuez, and, if possible, take possession of Toledo; while two other Spanish divisions should hold the passes of Banos and Perales; and five thousand Portuguese, under Sir Robert Wilson, were to act independently, and annoy the French flanks and rear as they best could.

The British consequently moved by Salvatiera

* "Details," &c.

and Placentia, effecting a junction with Cuesta at Oropesa on the 20th of July. On the 22nd Victor had retired and taken a position on the Alberche. The opportunity was at once given for attacking him, but Cuesta obstinately declined; and Victor, hearing that Wilson was already in his rear at Escalona, made a night march on Torijas.

Cuesta was a singular medley of opposite qualities. He was exceedingly brave—had some daring—overweening pride—and a most asinine obstinacy. Finding it desirable for the prosperity of the common cause to submit to the old man's folly, Sir Arthur Wellesley acted with singular forbearance. It had been arranged that Victor should be attacked on the 23rd, and when the British General reached his confederate's quarters to arrange the necessary details on the evening of the 22nd, Cuesta was asleep, and no one dared to waken him. At dawn, the British divisions were under arms, but Cuesta could not be disturbed till seven! At last an interview did take place, and then the weak old man positively declined to fight, because the day was *Sunday*. Victor had but twenty thousand men with him at the moment. The Alberche was fordable—the right and centre assailable: Cuesta's army numbered forty-seven thousand, and Wellesley's about twenty-one. Was ever such an

opportunity lost?—and all too through the stupid bigotry of a sleepy-headed Spaniard.

Meanwhile the great scarcity of provisions obliged the British to halt for a day or two, and Wellesley, to obtain supplies, took a position behind the Alberche.

TALAVERA.

Cuesta attacked by Victor—Saved by the division of British Generals. — Position selected by Lord Wellington. — Battle of Talavera. — Light regiments join the army by a forced march.

While Sir Arthur halted at Talavera, having two divisions across the river at Casa* Leguas, Cuesta followed the French, who he persuaded himself were retreating. Sebastiani marched from Toledo and joined Victor, while Joseph Buonaparte, having united his corps to Jourdan's, was hastening to a common centre. They all united at Torrijos, forming a *corps d'armée* of nearly fifty thousand men.

Cuesta, with all his Spanish obstinacy, would still insist that the French were not concentrating, but retreating, — but the delusion was short. Victor suddenly attacked him — and as his retreat was most disorderly, nothing but prompt assistance from Sherbrooke's division could have saved the stupid old man from destruction. When this was effected, the Guards crossed the river, leaving Mackenzie's division in possession of the

wood and convent on the right bank of the Alberche.

A recent deliverance seemed to have had no effect upon Spanish obstinacy. Though certain of being attacked, Cuesta lay loosely on the Alberche, into which, had his army been defeated, it must have been driven pell-mell. Happily, Sir Arthur, in reconnoitring the ground in the neighbourhood, discovered an extensive line on which both armies might be placed to their mutual advantage. "He took his measures with such promptitude, and issued his orders with such coolness and perspicuity, that every battalion, Spanish as well as English, stepped into the very spot which his admirable foresight had marked out for it."*

The position was about two miles in length, extending perpendicularly from the Tagus, on which the right rested in the town of Talavera. It was partially retrenched, having an intersected and most difficult country in its front. The centre was more open; but the left terminated favourably on a bold and commanding height, overlooking a considerable valley, which separated the left of the position from a range of rocky mountains. To the Spaniards the right was allotted, it being considered nearly unattackable — while the British defended the more accessible ground upon the left.

* Lord Londonderry's Narrative.

Talavera stands on the northern bank of the Tagus, the houses reaching down to the water's edge. The two armies were drawn up in line; the British on the left, extending from the town nearly to the Sierra de Gata, its extreme flank occupying a bold height near Alatuza de Segusella, having in its front a difficult ravine, and on its flank a deep valley. To the Spaniards the right was assigned. Their battalions were stationed among olive groves, with walls and fences interspersed, and an embankment running along the road, that formed an excellent breastwork, and rendered their position nearly unassailable. It was necessary to secure the point of junction where the British right touched Cuesta's left, — and, to effect this, ten guns were placed in battery on the summit of a bold knoll, with an English division to protect them, and a strong cavalry corps in reserve.

In the general disposition of the troops, Campbell's division was on the right of the British, Sherbrooke's division adjoining; Mackenzie occupied the next portion of the battle-ground, — while the height upon the left, that formed the key of the position, was intrusted to General Hill.

During the morning, the troops had been marching on the different points marked for their occupation, and had taken their ground, hitherto unmolested by the enemy; but at noon

Mackenzie's division was suddenly and furiously assailed by two heavy columns, which attacked the wood and convent. Partially surprised, the 87th and 88th regiments were thrown into a momentary confusion; and the French penetrated between the two brigades which formed the division. Immediately, by the exertions of their officers, the 31st, 45th, and 60th rifles were brought forward, and these regiments covered their companions, while they retired from the wood into the plain, retreating in beautiful order along the heights on the left of the position which they were directed to occupy.

The enemy continued their attack, and it had now extended partially along the whole line, growing more animated as the evening began to fall. The left, where the British stood, at once appeared the grand object of the Marshals.* They directed a strong force against it, forming their infantry into columns of battalions, which advanced in double quick, supported by a furious cannonade.

Mackenzie's division having retired a little, and, at the moment, forming a second line, the brunt of the assault fell upon a smaller brigade under General Donkin, then in possession of the height. The French, though they

* Joseph Buonaparte nominally commanded, but there were three Marshals on the field, beside General Sebastiani; namely, Jourdan, Victor, and Mortier.

came on with imposing bravery, were checked in front; but from the weakness of his brigade, Donkin's flank was turned on the left, and the hill behind crowned by the enemy.

But that success was momentary. Hill instantly led up the 48th, 29th, and 1st battalion of detachments. A close and murderous volley from the British was followed by a charge. The French were forced from the position with great loss; and the ridge again carried by a wing of the 29th with the bayonet.

There was a brief space of quiet; but determined to win the key of the position, though darkness had now set in, the French in great force once more rushed forward to wrest the height from its defenders. In the gloom the assailants and the assailed nearly touched each other. The red flash of a well-delivered volley showed the English the dark array that threatened them. The order was given to advance,—and again the British bayonet drove the columns down the hill.

No fighting could have been more desperate than that which marked this night attack. A feint had been made by Lapisse upon the Germans in the centre, while with the *élite* of their infantry, Ruffin and Vilatte ascended the heights, which, at every loss, they seemed resolute in winning. A terrific slaughter ensued. Could it be otherwise? So desperately was this night-

fighting maintained, and the regiments so closely engaged, that in the *mêlée*, some of the men fought with clubbed muskets.

These signal repulses of a powerful and gallant enemy could not but cost a heavy expenditure of blood. Many brave officers had fallen—and at this period of the conflict, the killed and wounded amounted to upwards of eight hundred men.

The troops lay upon their arms, and each battalion on the ground it had occupied the preceding day. The cavalry were stretched beside their horses; all were ready for an attack; but the night passed with some slight alarms, and no serious disturbance.

The morning was ushered in by a tremendous cannonade, while the grenadiers of Lapisse's division, in two columns, advanced again to attack the height upon the left. They were bravely led forward by their officers, and made many desperate but unavailing efforts to win the summit of the hill. Nothing could shake the firmness of the British. They allowed the columns to mount the rugged ascent, until they had nearly touched the ridge,—then, a close volley, a loud huzza, followed by a rapid charge, scattered the formation of the French, and sent them precipitously down the hill. Again and again the attempt was made with equal ill fortune; until, totally disheartened by repeated repulses,

and leaving the ground heaped with dead, the enemy abandoned all hope of carrying this well-defended position, and retreated out of fire.

It was now half-past eight, and the fighting had never intermitted from five that morning. The loss on both sides was frightful; the French infinitely greater than the British. Their repeated attacks on the height occasioned immense loss; and their troops, dispirited by want of success, and wearied by constant but unavailing exertion, showed little inclination to renew the battle.

The heat of the sun was intolerable. The movements, on the French part, were stayed. The firing ceased over the field, and the work of slaughter, by a sort of mutual consent, was for a time suspended. The French commenced cooking their dinners, and the English and their allies produced their scantier rations. During this temporary cessation of hostilities, it was a matter of some deliberation with the British commander, whether in turn he should become the assailant, or remain quietly and await the result of the enemy's decision; and it was a fortunate circumstance that the latter was his determination.

At this time a curious incident occurred, that for a brief space changed the character of war, and, even on a battle-field covered with the dead and dying, produced a display of kindly

feeling between two brave and noble-minded enemies.*

"A small stream, tributary to the Tagus, flowed through a part of the battle-ground, and separated the combatants. During the pause that the heat of the weather and the weariness of the troops had produced, both armies went to the banks of the rivulet for water. The men approached each other fearlessly, threw down their caps and muskets, chatted to each other like old acquaintances, and exchanged their brandy-flasks and wine-skins. All asperity of feeling seemed forgotten. To a stranger they would have appeared more like an allied force, than men hot from a ferocious conflict, and only gathering strength and energy to recommence it anew. But a still nobler rivalry for the time existed; the interval was employed in carrying off the wounded, who lay intermixed upon the hard-contested field; and, to the honour of both be it told, that each endeavoured to extricate the common sufferers, and remove their unfortunate friends and enemies, without distinction. Suddenly, the bugles sounded, the drums beat to arms, — many of the rival soldiery shook hands, and parted with expressions of mutual esteem, and in ten minutes after they were again at the bayonet's point."†

Having ascertained the part of the position, and

* "Details," &c. † "The Bivouac."

the extent of it, that was occupied by the English brigades, the Marshals determined to direct their undivided energies against that portion of the line, and, if possible, crush the British divisions by bearing on them with an overwhelming force. They formed in four columns of attack: the first was destined against that part of the ground where the British and Spaniards united; the second against Sherbrooke and Cameron's brigades; the third was directed against Mackenzie's and the Germans; and the fourth, in great strength, and accompanied by a mass of cavalry, moved up the valley to the left.

A fire from eighty pieces of artillery* announced the forward movement of the columns, who soon presented themselves, covered by a cloud of light infantry. A destructive cannonade was borne by the English brigades patiently—in vain the tirailleurs kept up a biting fire—but not a shot was returned by the British. Their orders to reserve their fire were obeyed, and the files steadily

* "As the weather was dreadfully hot, and it was impossible to know how long we should occupy this ground, orders were given to bury the men who had fallen the night before and in the morning attack, who were lying around the hill interspersed with its living defenders.

"The entrenching tools were thus employed; and it was curious to see soldiers burying their fallen comrades, with cannon-shot falling thickly around, and in the midst of them, leaving it probable that an individual might actually be employed in digging his own grave."

and quietly closed up, for the men were falling by dozens. Their assailants approached,—their officers called "*En avant!*" and the drums beat the *pas de charge.* Nothing could be more imposing than the advance,—nothing more complete than their discomfiture. Within twenty paces a shattering volley was delivered from the English line,—the word "*Charge!*" was given—and the bayonet did the rest.

Campbell's division, on the right, totally defeated the attack, and charging boldly in return, drove the French back, and captured a battery of ten guns. The enemy endeavoured to retake them, but the Spanish cavalry charged home—the cannon remained with the captors, and the right of the British was victorious everywhere.

The left attack failed totally. The British cavalry were posted in the valley where the hostile movement was being made; and Anson's brigade, consisting of the 23rd Light Dragoons, and the 1st King's German Hussars, were ordered to charge and check the advance. It was gallantly attempted,—and though in point of fact the charge failed, and the 23rd were nearly cut to pieces, the daring courage exhibited under circumstances perfectly desperate, so completely astounded the enemy, that their attack on the height was abandoned. If there was an error in the mode that charge was made, it arose from its fearless gallantry; and under common circumstances, its re-

sult would have been most glorious. Colonel Napier thus describes the affair:

"The ground upon which this brigade was in line is perfectly level, nor did any visible obstruction appear between it and the columns opposed. The grass was long, dry, and waving, concealing the fatal chasm that intervened. One of General Villatte's columns stood at some distance to the right of the building occupied by the light troops. These were directly in front of the 23rd Dragoons. Another was formed rather to the rear, and more in front of the German hussars, on the left of the line. Such were the immediate objects of the charge.

"For some time the brigade advanced at a rapid pace, without receiving any obstruction from the enemy's fire. The line cheered. It was answered from the hill with the greatest enthusiasm; never was anything more exhilarating or more beautiful than the commencement of this advance. Several lengths in front, mounted on a grey horse, consequently very conspicuous, rode Colonel Elley. Thus placed, he, of course, first arrived at the brink of a ravine, which, varying in width, extended along the whole front of the line. Going half speed at the time, no alternative was left him. To have checked his horse, and given timely warning, would have been impossible. With some difficulty he cleared it at a bound, and on gaining the opposite bank, endeavoured by gesture to

warn the 23rd of the dangerous ground they had to pass; but advancing with such velocity, the line was on the verge of the stream, before his signs could be either understood or attended to. Under any circumstances this must have been a serious occurrence in a cavalry charge; but when it is considered that four or five hundred dragoons were assailing two divisions of infantry, unbroken, and fully prepared for the onset, to have persevered at all was highly honourable to the regiment.

"At this moment the enemy, formed in squares, opened his tremendous fire. A change immediately took place. Horses rolled on the earth; others were seen flying back dragging their unhorsed riders with them; the German hussars coolly reined up; the line of the 23rd was broken. Still the regiment galloped forward. The confusion was increased; but no hesitation took place in the individuals of this gallant corps. The survivors rushed forward with, if possible, accelerated pace, passing between the flank of the square, now one general blaze of fire, and the building on its left."

Still the remainder of the 23rd, led on by Major Ponsonby, passing under this withering fire, assailed and overthrew a regiment of chasseurs; and, though attacked in turn by a squadron of Westphalian horse, and some Polish Lancers, it cut its way through these, and riding past

the intervals of the infantry, reached the base of the mountain, where the Spanish corps of observation secured it. Its loss was awful. In an affair that lasted but a few minutes, nine officers, twelve sergeants, two hundred rank and file, and two hundred and twenty-four horses, were rendered *hors de combat.*

On the centre, the attack was made with great steadiness and determination. The French columns deployed before they attempted to ascend the heights, and, regardless of broken ground, advanced to the charge with imposing gallantry. General Sherbrooke, having fully prepared his men, received them with a volley of musketry, which staggered their resolution, and the whole division rushing forward with the bayonet, the French were driven back with prodigious loss. But the Guards came loosely on. The French observed it; perceived an opening in the line, and threw in a tremendous fire on the Germans that caused a momentary confusion. The affair is thus narrated by an officer of the 48th. The celerity with which a mistake, that to other troops might have proved fatal, was remedied by the coolness of the commander, and the heroism of his army, could never be better exemplified.

"At this period of the battle, and in nearly their last attempt, the enemy had been repulsed and followed. The Guards, carried onwards by victorious excitement, advanced too far, and found

themselves assailed by the French reserve,* and mowed down by an overwhelming fire. They fell back, but as whole sections were swept away their ranks became disordered, and nothing but their stubborn gallantry prevented a total *déroute.* Their situation was most critical,—had the French cavalry charged home, nothing could have saved them. Lord Wellington saw the danger, and speedily despatched support. A brigade of horse was ordered up, and our regiment moved from the heights we occupied to assist our hard-pressed comrades. We came on at double-quick, and formed in the rear by companies, and through the intervals in our line the broken ranks of the Guards retreated. A close and well-directed volley from us arrested the progress of the victorious French, while with amazing celerity and coolness, the Guards rallied and reformed, and in a few minutes advanced in turn to support us. As they came on, the men gave a loud huzza. An Irish regiment to the right answered it with a thrilling cheer. It was taken up from regiment to regiment, and passed along the English line; and that wild shout told the advancing enemy that British valour was indomitable. The leading files of the French halted—turned—fell back—and never made another effort."†

* "The enemy instantly rallied, followed them, and were so confident of victory, that their officers were heard to exclaim, '*Allons, mes enfans, ills sont touts nes prisonniers.*'"

† "The Bivouac."

In every place the British were victorious. One forward movement of the Spaniards and Talavera would have proved the most decisive defeat that ever the French armies on the Peninsula had sustained. A rapid flanking march from Cuesta's right upon the Alberche must have compromised half the French army. But with troops so wretchedly disciplined it was impossible to change any previous formation when in face of an enemy; and thus the French Marshals were enabled to retreat in perfect order, with the greater portion of their baggage, the whole of their wounded, and all their artillery, with the exception of ten guns taken by Campbell's brigade, and seven abandoned in the woods, and afterwards secured.

As victory is ever damped by individual suffering, an event well-calculated to increase the horrors of a battle-field occurred, that cannot be recollected without the liveliest sorrow for those who suffered.

From the heat of the weather, the fallen leaves were parched like tinder, and the grass was rank and dry. Near the end of the engagement both were ignited by the blaze of some cartridge-papers, and the whole surface of the ground was presently covered with a sheet of fire. Those of the disabled who lay on the outskirts of the field managed to crawl away, or were carried off by their more fortunate companions who had

escaped unhurt; but, unhappily, many gallant sufferers, with "medicable wounds," perished in the flames before it was possible to extricate them.

The battle was ended at about six o'clock, and after that hour scarcely a shot was heard. Both armies occupied the positions of the morning, and the British bivouacked on the field, with little food and no shelter; while the dead lay silently around, and the moans of the wounded broke sadly on the ear, as they were conveyed all through the night to the hospitals in Salamanca.

The French were evidently about to retire — but, from a great inferiority in cavalry, pursuit was impossible. On the next morning, two of their divisions only were seen beyond the river, and these retreated on the night of the 31st, and followed the remainder of the beaten *corps d'armée.*

The British loss was extremely severe — and from the heavy cannonade, regiments not otherwise exposed, suffered much. The whole force, exclusive of the Spaniards, did not exceed nineteen thousand, and of these fully four thousand men were killed and wounded. The Spanish loss was inconsiderable, as they were never seriously engaged — not reaching altogether to a thousand *hors de combat.*

The casualties of Joseph Buonaparte's army it would be difficult to ascertain with anything like correctness. It has been stated at six, eight, and

even ten thousand. The intermediate estimate would probably be the truest—and certainly the French loss exceeded the allied by a third if not a half.

On the morning after the battle, the light brigade were reinforced by three splendid regiments, the 43rd, 52nd, and 95th, under General Crawford, who reached the army accompanied by a troop of horse artillery. Its march was remarkable, — sixty English miles were accomplished in twenty-seven hours! * Advancing under a burning sun, over a sandy country, badly supplied with water, with bad rations and scarcely any bread, the movement was extraordinary. When the weight a soldier in heavy marching order carries is considered, the distance these splendid regiments achieved was certainly a surprizing effort.

* "On comparing a great number of marches, it appears that an army of forty thousand men requires about eight hours to traverse, in average weather, a distance of fifteen miles, which may be called an average military day's march."—*Thiery.*

* * * * * * *

British troops have always been celebrated for the style and endurance with which they move.

"The marching past certainly afforded the best opportunity of observing the troops (those of the army of occupation) of the different nations in close contrast. As regards the infantry, it may be asserted without boast, that the British were acknowledged to move the best. The Grand Duke Constantine was heard to exclaim, '*Les Gardes marchent comme des Dieux!*'"—*Review of the Army at Paris.*

Aware that the armies were in presence of each other, and apprized that a battle was inevitable, an ardent wish to share the glory of the field, stimulated these soldiers to exertions that hunger, fatigue, and thirst could not abate; and though efforts almost beyond belief, failed to bring them to the battle-ground before the struggle terminated; the rapidity of their march, and the fine condition in which they joined the army, justly obtained for them the admiration of the victors of Talavera.

OPERATIONS FROM THE BATTLE OF TALAVERA TO THE AFFAIR OF THE COA.

Movements of Soult and Wellington.—Wilson's affair at Banos.—Defeats of the Spanish armies.—Fall of Gerona and Hostalrich.—Rodrigo besieged, and capitulates.—Julian Sanchez.—Unfortunate attempt by Crawford.—Probable movements of Massena.

SOULT, who had collected thirty-five thousand men, on learning the defeat of Talavera, made a flank movement to assist Joseph Buonaparte, and reached Placentia by the pass of Banos. Lord Wellington, on being apprised of the French Marshal's advance, instantly determined to march forward and engage him; while Cuesta observed the line of the Tagus, and protected the stores and hospitals at Talavera. Accordingly, on the 3rd of August, the British moved to Orapesa; but on that evening information was received that Soult had cut off Lord Wellington's communication with the bridge of Almarez, and that Cuesta was about to evacuate Talavera. This intelligence made an immediate change in Lord Wellington's plans indispensable, and it was necessary to cross the Tagus instantly.

A passage was effected by the bridge of Arzabispo, and the whole artillery and stores were safely brought off, over horrible roads, which hitherto had been deemed impracticable for anything but mules, and the rude carriages of the country. After a short stay, the British fell back on Badajoz, early in September.

Cuesta's sudden retreat from Talavera had not only endangered Lord Wellington, but nearly caused the total destruction of the Portuguese corps, commanded by Sir Robert Wilson. In obedience to orders, Sir Robert had advanced within twelve miles of the capital before he was recalled—and after narrowly escaping the French armies, by the ill-judged retirement of the Spanish general from Talavera, he found himself completely cut off from the Tagus. With considerable difficulty, the Portuguese general crossed the Sierra de Llana, and seized the pass of Banos, whither Soult, on falling back from Placentia to Leon, was rapidly advancing,—nothing remained for him but to defend the pass, and risk a battle with numbers immensely superior to his own. This determination was gallantly

* "The path which leads from Arzabispo, through the pass of Messa d'Ibor, into the great road from Almarez to Truxillo, Merida, and Badajoz, had been represented to us as wholly impassable for artillery. We found it extremely bad, no doubt, but we nevertheless continued to drag our guns along, and by dint of extraordinary exertions reached Torradilla."—*Lord Londonderry.*

carried into effect. After a desperate resistance of nine hours, Wilson was at last forced from the position, with a loss of eight hundred men; while the remainder of his corps dispersed, and succeeded in reaching Castello Branco.*

At this period a heavy calamity overtook the Spanish arms. Venegas, after his defeat at Almonacid, had re-organized his scattered army and united it with that of Cuesta, who had been succeeded in the chief command by Ariezaga. That general absurdly attempted to march at once on Madrid; and at Toledo encountered a French corps of thirty thousand men, in readiness to attack him. Although his force nearly doubled that of the enemy, Ariezaga declined the combat, and endeavoured to retreat. It was then too late; he was overtaken by Joseph Buonaparte while crossing the plains of Ocana on the 19th of November, and totally defeated with a loss of fifteen thousand men.

In a different scene the Spanish arms were equally unfortunate. Marchand had succeeded Ney, and he, holding his enemy in too great contempt, engaged Del Parque under circumstances which allowed the Duke to obtain a temporary advantage. The French fell back only

* "This they did, not as armies usually retreat, but by utterly dispersing, and again uniting at one particular point of rendezvous, which, previous to their rout, had been determined upon."—*Lord Londonderry.*

to return in greater force. An action was fought at Tammames, which terminated at first in the Spanish being only driven back, but eventually in their being utterly derouted.

Following up this success, Soult, with fifty-five thousand men, was despatched by Joseph against the southern provinces, and succeeded in crossing the Sierra Morena, though the whole range had been strongly fortified, and thirty thousand men, under Ariezaga, intrusted with its defence. So quickly and with such trifling loss was this dangerous operation achieved, that it was a question, whether the Marshal was most indebted for his success to treachery or cowardice. Cadiz was preserved by the prompt decision of the Duke of Albuquerque. The gates were closed against the French, and the city secured against bombardment, except from one point, occupied by Fort Matagorda.

All else had gone favourably for the French. Sebastiani defeated Ariezaga on his retreat to Grenada. That city and Malaga, after a faint effort at defence, fell. Gerona surrendered, after a brave and protracted resistance.* Hostalrich was also taken;† and Astorga capitulated in the middle of April. In fact, the French were everywhere victorious, and Spain once more was nearly at their feet. This, as Colonel Jones observes, was "the second crisis in the affairs of

* "Details," &c. † "Details," &c.

the Peninsula, as, by a succession of desultory and ill-planned enterprizes on the part of the Spaniards, all their armies had been annihilated, their fortresses reduced, and three-fourths of the kingdom subdued." Affairs certainly wore a gloomy aspect? Napoleon had openly announced his determination to drive the English into the sea; and his means, relieved as he was by an alliance with Austria, seemed amply sufficient to realize the threat. Circumstances had increased his resources, and left him a large disposable force to direct on Portugal; while Britain, in the madness of her policy, had wasted her military strength on that ill-designed and disastrous expedition to the Scheldt.

Fortunately, the British parliament saw—and not too late—the place where the struggle for European liberty was to be decided. As many of the Walcheren battalions as could be made effective, were recruited from the militias and sent out. The Portuguese, in British pay, were augmented to thirty thousand men—and England at last turned her attention to the point on which her political salvation depended, and where alone the battle of the Continent could be fought.

Napoleon was, at the same time, pouring in constant reinforcements over the Pyrenees, and strengthening his *corps d'armée* in every province on the Peninsula. The corps of Ney,

Junot, and Reynier, having united at Salamanca, comprised seventy thousand men, of which six thousand were cavalry; and Massena arrived from France, by the express command of Napoleon, to assume the command-in-chief. A part of the imperial guard crossed the Pyrenees to reinforce the army of the centre; and another body received orders to hold itself in readiness to march, it was generally believed, as a body-guard for the Emperor in person.

But still, notwithstanding the gloomy prospects of the British, it was surprising what a number of desertions took place from the enemy's corps. Between the commencement of 1810 and the month of May, nearly five hundred men, chiefly Germans and Italians, arrived, time after time, at the British outposts; while desertions from the English regiments were extremely rare.

Early in May, Massena prepared for active operations, and invested the fortress of Rodrigo. The inferiority of Lord Wellington's force rendered any attempt on his part to prevent it impossible. All that could be done was to observe the enemy closely; and for this purpose, headquarters were transferred to Almeida, which, after a few days, were farther retired to Alverca, six leagues in the rear.

The investment of Rodrigo, which occasional advances of the British had partially relaxed, be-

came now more serious. Ney determined that the place should fall — and taking post on a range of high grounds with thirty thousand men, he covered effectually the operations carried on by Junot, whose separate force amounted to forty thousand more.

It was communicated, that Matagorda* had fallen,— that Cadiz, of course, must yield,— that divisions of the guards had entered Madrid, — and that Napoleon was absolutely across the Pyrenees. Other tidings were of better import. Ballasteros was on the Guadalquiver, and so threatening in his movements, as to require Reynier to be detached to check him; while the mountain districts were filled with Guerillas, who cut off every detached party of the French, plundered their convoys, interrupted their commu-

* The fire of forty-eight guns and mortars were concentrated on the little fort of Matagorda, and the feeble parapet disappeared in a moment before this crushing flight of metal. * * * The troops fell fast; the enemy shot quick and close; a staff, bearing the Spanish flag, was broken six times within an hour. * * Thirty hours the tempest raged, and sixty-four men out of one hundred and forty were down, when the remnant of the garrison was removed. During this tremendous fire, a young drum-boy was ordered to fetch water from the well, but the child hesitated; a sergeant's wife, called Ritson, instantly caught up the bucket, crossed the line of fire, and though the cord that held the vessel was cut by a shot, she filled, and brought it safely back to the wounded men who were lying in the casemate.—*Abridged from Napier.*

nications, and kept the whole of their posts constantly on the alert. In Castile particularly, their audacity was boundless. They had carried off an aide-de-camp of Kellerman from the gates of Valladolid; and no Frenchman could trust himself in the open country without a powerful escort.*

The siege of Rodrigo continued: a gallant resistance was made, for the garrison disputed every inch of ground, sallying frequently, and maintaining a well-directed fire that occasioned the besiegers considerable loss. The old governor, Hervasti, did wonders — and with a garrison of four thousand men, and fortifications in bad condition — many parts of the wall having its breaches only stopped loosely with rubbish — he kept seventy thousand men at bay, provided with siege stores in abundance, and a numerous corps of active and scientific engineers to direct the labours of the thousands who composed their working parties. On the 30th of June the breach was practicable, and stormed — but the French were repulsed, after suffering an enormous loss in killed and wounded.

Though the British army looked on, they could not save the fortress. The siege was pressed, and the outposts of the two armies came occasionally in contact with each other.

On the 4th of July the French made a strong

* "Details," &c.

reconnoissance with five regiments of cavalry, a corps of infantry, and some guns. A spirited affair ensued—and Gallegos and Almeida were given up, and a position taken by the British in rear of Fort Conception.

Time passed without any affair of moment occurring, until Ciudad Rodrigo capitulated, after a noble defence * of a full month, with open trenches. Julian Sanchez, finding the place must fall, quitted the city at midnight with his lancers, and cut his way through the enemy's posts.†

Ney, it is said, annoyed at the obstinacy with which the fortress held out, until the breach was found by Hervasti indefensible, and the troops for the assault were actually formed in the trenches, declined all terms but unconditional surrender. Massena, however, with more generosity, conceded the honours of war to the brave and resolute commandant.

The enemy's patrols had latterly become exceedingly troublesome, annoying the villages immediately in front of the British posts, and plundering them of anything which could be found. General Crawford determined to cut off the next of these marauding parties, and moved

* Forty-two thousand shells were thrown into the city, and five-and-twenty thousand from it. During the last sixteen days, the consumption of powder amounted to eight hundred and ninety-three quintals, each quintal containing one hundred and thirty-two pounds.

† "Details," &c.

at midnight with six squadrons of cavalry, in the hope that before daybreak he should get in the rear of the French patrols, whom he expected to fall in with. In the darkness he lost his way, and unexpectedly encountered the enemy in ground where his cavalry were completely arrested by the French infantry. In this vexatious affair the British suffered considerable loss,—and a very valuable officer, Colonel Talbot of the 14th Light Dragoons, was killed. It was exceedingly mortifying that two hundred French infantry should escape from six hundred British dragoons,—and the circumstance occasioned a great sensation in the coteries of the allied bivouacs.*

Consequent on the fall of Rodrigo, numerous movements took place. It was impossible to guess in what way Massena would follow up his success, and the best arrangements were made by Lord Wellington to meet every probable contingency. One of two plans was most likely to be adopted by the French Marshal—either by reinforcing Reynier to overpower Hill; or, by uniting his (Reynier's) corps by the pass of Perales with his own, attack with oppressive numbers the British on the Coa. The chief danger seemed to rest in an attack on Hill. If it succeeded, the position of the Guarda would be untenable, and a precipitous retreat on Zezere imperative. On the Coa, there was everything in favour of the

* "Details," &c.

British. The ground was difficult; three or four marches would unite Hill's corps with the main body—and the Portuguese, it was supposed, would fight bravely in defence of their own frontier. Every circumstance, therefore, induced the wish that the French Marshal would assail the British in their position on the Coa.

AFFAIR ON THE COA.—FALL OF ALMEIDA.

Battle of the Coa.—Almeida besieged.—Great magazine blown up.—Place surrenders.—Wellington falls back behind the Mondego.—Romana defeated by Mortier.

While the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo was in progress, the light division, under General Crawford, after falling back on the fifth, took up a position on the line of the Azava. From the contiguity of the enemy, the greatest vigilance was necessary. The pickets extended from Carpia to the junction of the Azava and Agueda; and the outpost duty devolved upon the Germans, with a part of the 16th light dragoons. Crawford was particularly directed to avoid a battle—and, in the event of Soult advancing, he was instructed to give way at once, and retire across the river. A strict obedience to the letter of his orders was not among the qualities for which Crawford was remarkable; and whether he supposed from his position being under the guns of Almeida, that it

would be respected by the French, or that he had determined to resist the forward movement of the enemy, although apprised on the 21st that the French were advancing, and that Fort Conception had been abandoned and blown up, he declined passing the Coa, and formed the light division in line, his left resting on Almeida, and his right and rear covered by the river.

At break of day on the 24th, an entire corps, amounting to eighteen thousand men, of whom three thousand five hundred were cavalry, with a powerful artillery, attacked the centre of the position. The pickets between Villamula and Almeida were driven back, and retired before overpowering numbers, skirmishing in beautiful order, and disputing every inch of ground. An extensive plain stretched from Villamula to the Coa, intersected by walls and enclosures, and, of course, afforded a fine field for light infantry manœuvres. Of this advantage the British availed themselves; and every fence and hedge were obstinately maintained, until, oppressed by numbers, they were reluctantly yielded to the enemy.

The centre was now seriously attacked, and though the 95th and Portuguese Caçadores fought gallantly, Crawford perceived that he could not hold his ground, and determined to cross the river, beyond which his cavalry and guns had already retired. A bridge over the Coa was the only route by which he could retreat — and it

lay completely exposed to a sweeping fire from the French artillery. However, there was no alternative; the infantry moved off in echelon by its left,—and though furiously assailed, succeeded in crossing to the other bank.

The irregularity of the ground, and the frequency and height of the enclosures, rendered an orderly retreat almost impracticable; but the operation was boldly and coolly executed. To prevent the French from forcing the bridge, and allow time for the regiments to reform, the 43rd and 95th were drawn up in front of the pass, and directed to oppose to the last every attempt the French should make to cross it. The enemy seemed equally determined; and having collected an imposing force, a fierce and well-sustained attack produced one of the most desperate and sanguinary encounters that the annals of modern warfare record.

"The French skirmishers, swarming on the right bank, opened a biting fire, which was returned as bitterly; the artillery on both sides played across the ravine, the sounds were repeated by numberless echoes, and the smoke, rising slowly, resolved itself into an immense arch, spanning the whole chasm, and sparkling with the whirling fuzees of the flying shells. The enemy gathered fast and thickly; his columns were discovered forming behind the high rocks, and a dragoon was seen to try the depth of the stream above, but two shots

from the 52nd killed horse and man, and the carcases, floating between the hostile bands, showed that the river was impassable. The monotonous tones of a French drum were then heard, and in another instant, the head of a noble column was at the long narrow bridge. A drummer and an officer, in a splendid uniform, leaped forward together, and the whole rushed on with loud cries. The depth of the ravine at first deceived the soldiers' aim, and two-thirds of the passage was won ere an English shot had brought down an enemy; yet a few paces onwards the line of death was traced, and the whole of the leading French section fell as one man! Still the gallant column pressed forward, but no foot could pass that terrible line; the killed and wounded rolled together until the heap rose nearly even with the parapet, and the living mass behind melted away rather than give back.

"The shouts of the British now rose loudly, but they were confidently answered, and, in half an hour, a second column, more numerous than the first, again crowded the bridge. This time, however, the range was better judged, and ere half the distance was won, the multitude was again torn, shattered, dispersed and slain; ten or twelve men only succeeded in crossing, and took shelter under the rocks at the brink of the river."*

* Nothing can be more spirited and graphic than the description of the affair, as given by Colonel Napier.

Night came—and the light division, after its heroic resistance of an overwhelming force, retreated, under cover of the darkness, to a position three leagues from Averca. The night march was made in perfect order; the artillery brought safely off; the field equipage removed; and though Massena, in his despatches, spoke of colours and cannon having been taken, not a trophy nor a gun was abandoned by Crawford, and a loss fully as severe as what he suffered was inflicted on the enemy in return. Colonel Hall, who had arrived but the preceding day from England to join the 43rd, fell in this affair—and about three hundred and fifty were returned as killed, wounded, and missing.

Never did British troops fight with more gallantry, and at a greater disadvantage; and if Crawford—as it must be admitted by all that he did so—imprudently brought on an action, no officer, under more trying circumstances, could have fought himself more ably out of a scrape. That Crawford was, in a military view, to blame, in permitting himself to be overtaken on the right bank of the river, is true; and to waste his strength in an unnecessary combat, from which no advantage could result, was equally injudicious. But no affair could have been more brilliant than the encounter on the Coa; and while a useless expenditure of life was to be deplored, night never fell upon a braver field, and closed more gallant

efforts, than those made by the light regiments of the British, throughout that long and doubtful day.

On the 25th and 26th the French appeared on the left bank of the Coa, but it was doubtful whether they would sit down before Almeida, or merely mask it with a corps, and push forward at once into Portugal with all their disposable force. Lord Wellington, in consequence, decided on falling back to the gorges of the Estrella, where he could command a strong position, in the event of Massena's advance forcing on an engagement. Orders were accordingly issued for the cavalry to move to Alverca; while the light division marched to Celerica, the first to Penhancas, the third to Carapentra, and the fourth continued on the Guarda, to keep the communication open with Hill's corps at Alalay.

On the 14th of August the French regularly sate down before Almeida, and broke ground on the ensuing day. On the 26th, at daylight, eleven batteries opened on the fortress, with a fire from sixty-five pieces of siege artillery. As Almeida was strongly garrisoned, well provided and stored, and under the command of an English governor, strong expectations were entertained that its resistance would far exceed that of Ciudad Rodrigo, which in every point was the feebler fortress of the two. But these high hopes were fated to be miserably disappointed.

On the evening upon which the French batteries had opened, in transferring ammunition from the grand magazine to the ramparts, a shell dropped into a tumbril that was leaving the door of the building, and igniting the powder with which it was loaded, the tumbril blew up, and most unfortunately communicating with the depôt, produced a frightful explosion. The loss of life was, of course, great — numbers both of the garrison and the inhabitants perished; half the guns were dismounted; the works shaken to their foundations; and the ammunition reduced to some fifty barrels of powder. Treachery also was at work; the Portuguese officers in a body, headed by the second in command, proceeded to the governor* and insisted that he should surrender; and the major of artillery, who had been sent out to propose terms, proved a traitor. He acquainted the French Marshal with the full extent of the misfortune occasioned by the explosion; and Massena, per-

* There is something particularly *naïve* in Southey's remarks:—"The Lieutenant-governor," says the Doctor, "had behaved well till the batteries opened; he was then so terrified, that he shut himself up in the bomb-proofs." This commendatory notice is excessively amusing. To the moment when "the batteries opened," the fellow was as safe as if he had been sitting *tête-à-tête* with the Doctor; and, to do him justice, on the first intimation of danger, he lost no time in establishing his cowardice. "The Major of Artillery" is also lauded for his conduct "during the siege;" but it

ceiving that Almeida was at his mercy, of course dictated what terms he pleased.

On entering the ruined fortress, the French general dismissed the militia to their homes, and having paraded the troops of the line, tendered them his protection, provided they joined the invading army, and took service under Napoleon. "To the eternal disgrace of the persons thus tampered with, all, both officers and men, embraced the proposal, and all passed over, without the slightest apparent reluctance, to the ranks of the enemy." *

When the fall of Almeida was known, Lord Wellington, who had advanced when Massena broke ground, fell back to the position on which he had previously retired; and anxious to get into closer communication with General Hill, he retreated leisurely on Gouvea. By this movement he checked any attempt that might have been intended from Sabugal by Covilhos, and effectually secured the fortified position of Zezere from being turned.

Yet the situation of the allies was truly critical. The fall of Almeida permitted Massena to

appears that he, too, took the earliest opportunity to prove himself a traitor. In our poor opinion, two scoundrels never deserved a "cast of office" from the Provost-marshal better, than the Lieutenant of Almeida and his confederate, the "Major of Artillery."

* Lord Londonderry.

advance with confidence — while in numbers the French Marshal was immensely superior;* and of the allied force, a great portion of the Portuguese had never been under fire. The news of Romana's defeat by Mortier, made matters still more alarming; as the latter might come up in sufficient time to threaten the right of the allies by Alcantara or Abrantes.

But Massena's movements ended this suspense —and Wellington was about to achieve one of his most splendid victories.

* At this period, (immediately before the battle of Busaco,) the best information made the French united force exceed seventy thousand men. The exact strength of the allies was, 23,868 infantry, 2,870 cavalry, and about 2,000 artillery; making 28,738 British soldiers. The Portuguese corps numbered 21,712 infantry, 1,696 cavalry, and 1,000 gunners; making a grand total of 52,136 men, of which nearly 25,000 were detached under Hill and Leith, leaving only 28,000 disposable troops with Lord Wellington.

BUSACO.

British position. — Movements. — Disposition of the Allies.— Battle of Busaco.—Casualties of both armies.

It was impossible to avoid a battle. Wellington crossed the Mondego, while the French were concentrated at Viseu. The first division had been placed in observation of the Oporto road, the light, on the road of Viseu; but the French having passed the Criz, Lord Wellington changed his position, and fell back upon the heights of Busaco.

The mountain range, upon which the British retired, was about eight miles long; its right touching the Mondego, and the left stretching over very difficult ground to the Sierra de Caramula. There was a road cresting the Busaco ridge, and a ford at Pena Cova, communicating with the Murcella ridge — and the face of the position was steep, rugged, and well-defended by the allied artillery. Along the front a sweeping fire could be maintained — and on a part of the summit, cavalry might act, if necessary.

To an assailing enemy, a position like that of Busaco, would present most serious difficulties;

and, therefore, it was generally believed that Massena would not risk a battle. But Lord Wellington thought differently; and coolly added, "If he does, I shall beat him."

Pack's division had fallen back on the 22nd; and on the 23rd Massena drove in the British cavalry. The third division took a position at Antonio de Contara, and the fourth at the convent; while the light division bivouacked in a pine wood.* On the 24th it fell back four miles, and some skirmishing of no particular importance took place.

The 25th had nearly brought on a second affair between Crawford and the enemy. Immense masses of the French were moving rapidly forward, and the cavalry had interchanged a pistol fire, when Lord Wellington arrived, and instantly retired the division. Not a moment could be lost; the enemy came on with amazing rapidity, but the British rear-guard behaved with its usual determination; and after a series of quick and

* A singular circumstance, which occurred that night in the bivouac of Crawford's division, is thus related:

"One of those extraordinary panics that, in ancient times, were attributed to the influence of a hostile god, took place. No enemy was near, no alarm was given, yet suddenly the troops, as if seized with a frenzy, started from sleep, and dispersed in every direction; nor was there any possibility of allaying this strange terror, until some persons called out that the enemy's cavalry were among them, when the soldiers mechanically ran together in masses, and the illusion was instantly dissipated."—*Napier.*

beautifully-executed manœuvres, secured their retreat on the position. Both armies that evening bivouacked in each other's presence — and sixty-five thousand French infantry, covered by a mass of voltigeurs, formed in the British front; while scarcely fifty thousand of the allies were in line on the Sierra de Busaco, and these, of necessity, were extended over a surface which their numbers were quite incompetent to defend.

Ney and Reynier agreed that the moment of their arrival afforded the best chance for attacking Wellington successfully — and Massena was informed that the allied troops were only getting into their ground, and that their dispositions were accordingly imperfect. But the Marshal came up too late; all the arrangements of Wellington had been coolly and admirably effectuated.

The British brigades were continuously posted. On the right, General Hill's division was stationed. Leith, on his left, prolonged the line, with the Lusitanian legion in reserve. Picton joined Leith, and was supported by a brigade of Portuguese. The brigades of Spencer crested the ridge, and held the ground between the third division and the convent; and the fourth division closed the extreme left, covering the mountain path of Milheada, with part of the cavalry on a flat, and a regiment of dragoons in reserve on the summit of the Sierra. Pack's division formed the advanced guard to the right, and extended half-

way down the hill; while in a hollow below the convent, the light brigade and Germans were thrown out. The whole front was covered with skirmishers—and on every point, from which the artillery could effectively range, the guns were placed in battery.

While these dispositions were being completed, evening had come on; both armies established themselves for the night, and the French lighted fires. Some attempts of the enemy to introduce light troops, in broken numbers, among the wooded hollows in front of the light division, indicated an intention of a night attack, and the rifles and Caçadores drove them back. But no attempt was made — and a mild and warm atmosphere allowed the troops to bivouac without inconvenience on the battle-ground. A few hours of comparative stillness passed—one hundred thousand men slept under the canopy of heaven; and before the first faint glimmering of light, all stood quietly to arms, and prepared for a bloody day.

Shrouded by the grey mist that still was lingering on the Sierra, the enemy advanced. Ney, with three columns, moved forward in front of the convent, where Crawford's division was posted; while Reynier, with two divisions, approached by less difficult ground the pickets of the third division, before the feeble light permitted his movements to be discovered. With their usual impetuosity the French pushed forward, and the British

as determinately opposed. Under a heavy fire of grape and musketry they topped the heights; and on the left of the third division, gained the summit of the mountain—their leading battalions securing themselves among the rocks, and threatening the ridge of the Sierra. The disorder of a Portuguese regiment, the 8th, afforded them also a partial advantage. But the fire of two guns with grape opened on their flank; in front, a heavy fusilade was maintained; while, advancing over the crown of the height, the 88th and four companies of the 45th charged furiously with the bayonet, and with an ardour that could not be resisted. Both French and English were intermixed in a desperate *mêlée* — both fought hand to hand—both went struggling down the mountain—the head of the French column annihilated —and covering the descent, from the crown to the valley, with heaps of its dead and dying.*

When a part of the Sierra had been gained, Leith, perceiving that the French had occupied it, moved the 38th on their right flank, with the Royals in reserve. The 9th formed line under a heavy fire, and without returning a shot, fairly deforced the French grenadiers from the rocks with the bayonet. The mountain crest was now secure, Reynier completely repulsed, and Hill, closing up to support, prevented any attempt being made to recover it.

* "Details," &c.

The greater difficulty of the ground rendered Ney's attacks still less successful, even for a time, than Reynier's had proved. Crawford's disposition of the light division was masterly. Under a dipping of the ground between the convent and plateau, the 43rd and 52nd were formed in line; while higher up the hill, and closer to the convent, the Germans were drawn up. The rocks in front formed a natural battery for the guns; and the whole face of the Sierra was crowded with riflemen and Caçadores. Morning had scarcely dawned, when a sharp and scattered musketry was heard among the broken hollows of the valley that separated the rival armies — and presently the French appeared in three divisions— Loisson's mounting the face of the Sierra — Marchand's inclining leftwards, as if it intended to turn the right flank of the light division—and the third held in reserve.

The brigade of General Simon led the attack— and reckless of the constant fusilade of the British light troops, and the sweeping fire of the artillery, which literally ploughed through the advancing column, from its leading to its last section, the enemy came steadily and quickly on. The horse-artillery worked their guns with amazing rapidity—delivering round after round with such beautiful precision, that the wonder was, how any body of men could advance under such a withering and incessant cannonade. But

nothing could surpass the gallantry of the assailants. On they came—and in a few moments, their skirmishers, "breathless, and begrimed with powder," topped the ridge of the Sierra. The British guns were instantly retired—the French cheers arose—and, in another second, their column topped the height.

General Crawford, who had coolly watched the progress of the advance, called on the 43rd and 52nd to "Charge!" A cheer that pealed for miles over the Sierra answered the order, and "eighteen hundred British bayonets went sparkling over the brow of the hill." The head of the French column was overwhelmed in an instant; "both its flanks were lapped over by the English wings,"* while volley after volley, at a few yards distance, completed its destruction — and marked with hundreds of its dead and dying, all down the face of the Sierra, the course of its murderous discomfiture. Some of the light troops continued slaughtering the broken columns nearly to the bottom of the hill, until Ney's guns opened from the opposite side, and covered the escape of the relics of Simon's division.

And yet the bravery of the French merited a better result—no troops advanced more gallantly; and when the British steel was glittering in their faces, as with resistless force the fatal rush was made over the crest of the Sierra, every man of

* Napier.

the first section of the French raised and discharged his musket,* although before his finger parted from the trigger, he knew that an English bayonet would be quivering in his heart. Simon was wounded and left upon the field, and his division so totally shattered as to be unable to make any second attempt.

On the right, Marchand's brigades having gained the cover of a pine wood, threw out their skirmishers and endeavoured to surmount the broken surface that the hill everywhere presented. Pack held them in check, while the Guards, formed on the brow of the Sierra, were seen in such imposing force, as to render any attempt on the position useless. Crawford's artillery flanked the pine wood, and maintained a rapid fire; when, finding his troops sinking under an unprofitable slaughter, Ney, after the effort of an hour, retired behind the rocks.

The roar of battle was stilled.† Each side removed their wounded men; and the moment the firing ceased, both parties amicably intermingled, and sought and brought off their disabled comrades. When this labour of humanity was over, a French company having taken possession

* It was said that by this discharge, two officers and ten British soldiers fell. This is not surprising, as the bayonets were literally touching.

† Nearly at this moment the following incident occurred:—"A poor orphan Portuguese girl, about seventeen years of

of a village within pistol-shot of General Crawford, stoutly refused to retire when directed. The commander of the light division turned his artillery on the post, overwhelmed it in an instant with his cannonade, and when the guns ceased firing, sent down a few companies of the 43rd to clear the ruins of any whom his grape might have left alive, — the obstinacy of the French officer having drawn upon him, as justly as unnecessarily, the anger of the fiery leader of the light division.

The loss sustained by Massena in his attempt upon the British position at Busaco was immense.* A general of brigade, Graind'orge, and above a thousand men, were killed; Foy, Merle, and Simon, with four thousand five hundred, were wounded; and nearly three hundred taken

age, and very handsome, was seen coming down the mountain, driving an ass, loaded with all her property, through the French army. * * * She passed over the field of battle with a childish simplicity, unconscious of her perilous situation, and scarcely understanding which were the hostile, and which the friendly troops; for no man on either side was so brutal as to molest her."—*Napier.*

* The French loss was at first considerably exaggerated; and few English writers yet agree in estimating its amount. According to Colonel Jones, Massena's loss was two thousand killed, three hundred prisoners, and from five to six thousand wounded. Napier only makes their killed eight hundred, and their wounded and prisoners about three thousand seven hundred. Other writers differ as widely in their estimates. The number given above is probably nearer to the true amount.

prisoners. The allied casualties did not exceed twelve hundred and fifty men, of which nearly one half were Portuguese.

No battle witnessed more gallant efforts on the part of the enemy than Busaco; and that the British loss should be so disproportionate to that suffered by the French, can readily be conceived from the superior fire, particularly of cannon, which the position of Busaco enabled Lord Wellington to employ. The Portuguese troops behaved admirably—their steadiness and bravery were as creditable to the British officers who disciplined and led them on, as it was satisfactory to the Commander of the Allies—proving that the Lusitanian levies, when incorporated with his island soldiery, were an over-match for the best troops in Europe.

RETREAT TO TORRES VEDRAS.

Massena's flank movement occasions Wellington to retire from Busaco. — Proclamation to the Portuguese. — It meets with general obedience. — Beautiful order of the retreat. — Trant captures the French hospitals at Coimbra. — Massena's supposed ignorance of the lines.—Position of Torres Vedras.

MASSENA had suffered too heavily in his attempt on the British position, to think of attacking the Sierra de Busaco a second time. Early on the 28th he commenced quietly retiring his advanced brigades, and in the evening, was reported to be marching with all his divisions on the Malhada road, after having set fire to the woods to conceal his movements, which was evidently intended to turn the British left. Orders were instantly given by Lord Wellington to abandon the Sierra — at night fall, Hill's division was again thrown across the river — and the remainder of the brigades defiling to their left, moved by the shorter road on Coimbra, and resumed the line of the Mondego on the 30th.

The celebrated proclamation to the Portuguese nation, was issued by Lord Wellington previous to the commencement of his retreat. Determined to destroy any hope the French might have en-

tertained of subsisting their armies on the resources of the country, the people were emphatically desired, on the approach of the enemy, to abandon their dwellings, drive off their cattle, destroy provisions and forage, and leave the villages and towns deserted of inhabitants, and devastated of everything which could be serviceable to the invaders. Generally, these orders were obeyed with a devotion that seems remarkable. Property was wasted or concealed—and the shrine and cottage alike abandoned by their occupants—the peasant deserting the hearth where he had been nursed, and the monk the altar where he had worshipped from his boyhood. The fugitives accompanied the army on its march,—and when it halted in the lines, one portion of the wanderers proceeded to Lisbon, while the greater number crossed the Tagus, to seek on its southern shores a temporary retreat from those who had obliged them to sacrifice their possessions, and fly from the dwellings of their fathers.*

Nothing could surpass the fine attitude maintained by the British in their retreat on Torres Vedras, and every march was leisurely executed, as if no enemy was in the rear. By the great roads of Leria and Espinal the receding movement was effected; and, with the exception of some affairs of cavalry, and a temporary embarrassment in passing through Condeixa, occasioned by a false alarm and narrow streets, a retreat of

* "Details," &c.

nearly two hundred miles, was effected with as little confusion as attends an ordinary march. No portion of the field equipage—no baggage whatever was captured — and still more strange, a greater number of prisoners were taken from the pursuers than lost by the pursued — a fact, in the history of retreats, without a parallel.

Whether the severity of the weather, by which the roads were dreadfully cut up, or the privations his army experienced in traversing an exhausted country, repressed his activity, Massena certainly did not press the British with the vigour that might have been expected from an army so immensely superior in its numbers, and particularly in cavalry, an arm so effective in pursuit.

The French had formed an imperfect estimate of the magnificent position upon which Wellington was retiring. In their rear the allies had abundant supplies — while the French advance led through an exhausted district, an unfriendly population behind, and a host of irregulars around, waiting an opportunity to become actively aggressive. In the rear of the Prince of Esling, Trant, on the Coimbra road, had five thousand militia — Wilson was at Busaco, in similar strength — while from the north, Silviera was advancing with fifteen thousand men, and Bacillar with eight thousand.

The French Marshal soon felt the activity of these partisans. Supposing that Coimbra was

safe from aggression, he had left his hospitals there, as he believed, in perfect security, protected by a company of marines attached to the Imperial Guard. Trant, by a sudden and well-executed march, threw himself between Coimbra and the advancing army, and captured the entire of the hospitals and stores, with the marines left for their defence.

It was said that the French were quite ignorant both of the position of the lines and the extent of their defences. That they were unprepared for finding themselves totally barred from farther effort by works, embracing eight leagues of country, and stretching from the Tagus to the ocean, may be conceived; but that such an undertaking as fortifying Torres Vedras—a herculean task requiring the labour of thousands to effect, and an enormous expenditure of money and stores to carry on—that this could proceed to its completion, without its progress being reported to the invaders, is nothing but a mere romance, and cannot for a moment be credited.*

Massena, after a three days' *reconnoissance*, and under the advice of his chief engineers, abandoned all hope of forcing this singular position—and when Torres Vedras is described, it will be admitted that the Marshal's decision was correct.

These celebrated lines, constructed to protect an embarkation should it be necessary, and cover the

* "Details," &c.

capital from attack, were planned by Lord Wellington, and executed chiefly by Colonel Fletcher and Captain Jones of the engineers — and to describe them, the features of the country over which they extended must be briefly noticed.

The Peninsula on which Lisbon stands is traversed by two lofty heights, that stretch from the Tagus to the ocean, varying in altitude and abruptness, and running in a parallel direction, at a distance of from six to nine miles. Through the passes in these mountains, the four great roads that communicate between Lisbon and the interior run. The line on the Sierra next the capital is the stronger of the two. It commences at Ribumar, on the Rio Lorenzo, runs by Mafra, Cabeca de Montachique, and the pass of Bucellas, and descends precipitously on the plain, about an English league from the Tagus. This is the only weak point — and every means that skill and labour could effect, was exhausted to fortify every spot that Nature had left open, and thus render Torres Vedras, its extent considered, the strongest position in Europe.*

"In front of Via Longa, upon an eminence rising from the plain, at a short distance from the river, six redoubts were constructed, so situated, in consequence of the nearly circular formation of the plateau, as to command the approaches in

* Leith Hay's description of the lines has been selected, as well for its graphic power as its fidelity.

every direction within the range of their artillery. Three of these immediately domineered the great route from Alhandra to Lisbon, to the right of which, upon a knoll, in front of the town of Povoa, another work was formed, sweeping the communication in the direction of Quintella. On the bank of the Tagus, a redoubt, armed with four twelve-pounders, terminated the line at its eastern extremity. Fifty-nine redoubts, containing two hundred and thirty-two pieces of cannon, estimated to require seventeen thousand five hundred men to garrison them, protected the weaker points, enfiladed the roads, or swept the ascent to the escarped mountains in the range of this extended position, occupying a front of twenty-two miles."

"The front line had been originally intended for one of isolated posts, rather than an unbroken extent of defensive ground, which it was subsequently made. It rests also on the Atlantic at the mouth of the Lozandra; its weakest point being in the rear of the village of Runa, where it stretches to Monte Agraca, and ample care was taken to correct this natural defect."

"On the Sierra, in the rear of Sobral, was constructed a redoubt of great magnitude, armed with twenty-five pieces of artillery, and prepared for a garrison of one thousand men. This formidable work, from its commanding and centrical situation, was the constant daily resort of Lord

Wellington. There he came every morning, and continued until it was ascertained that no hostile movement had taken place, and until light permitted a *reconnoissance* of the enemy's troops encamped opposite. From the redoubt on Monte Agraça, the line continued, crossing the valleys of Arruda and Calhandriz, until it rested on the Tagus at Alhandra."

"Nature and art had rendered the ground from Calhandriz to the river particularly strong; but to make the defences still more formidable, and to form an intermediate obstruction, redoubts were thrown up extending to the rear, nearly at right angles with the front line. These swept the whole portion of the valley, by which a column of infantry must penetrate, even had it succeeded in forcing an entrance into the ravine. Sixty-nine works of different descriptions fortified this line; in these were mounted three hundred and nineteen pieces of artillery, requiring upwards of eighteen thousand men to garrison them; and the extent, in a direct line from flank to flank, was twenty-five miles."

Colonel Leith Hay explains the mode in which these formidable lines would have been defended. "It has been erroneously supposed that the regular army was, in the event of an attack, to occupy the redoubts and other works in the lines, or, at all events, that a large proportion of the troops would of necessity defend these temporary

fortifications. In this calculation of probable circumstances, no British soldiers, with the exception of artillery, would have acted within their walls. Some Portuguese infantry, with the militia and ordonanza, were destined to compose the garrisons; while the whole allied army, numerous, brilliant in equipment, high in spirit, confident in its great commander, was prepared to move in every direction to cover the summits of mountains, to descend into valleys, or to pour in torrents on any luckless column, that with diminished numbers might have forced past the almost impenetrable obstacles of this grand position."

"In addition to the works thrown up in either line, or in the intervening points of communication, rivers were obstructed in their course, flooding the valleys and rendering the country swampy and impassable; trenches were cut from whence infantry, perfectly protected, might fire on the advancing columns of an enemy; these being also flanked by artillery, sweeping the approaches to them in every direction. Mountains were scarped as above stated; abattis of the most formidable description, either closed the entrance to ravines, impeded an approach to the works, or blocked up roads, in which deep cuts were also marked out for excavation; routes conducting from the front were rendered impracticable; others within the lines either repaired, or form-

ed to facilitate communication, to admit the passage of artillery, or reduce the distance by which the troops had to move for the purposes of concentration or resistance; bridges were mined, and prepared for explosion. Telegraphs erected at Alhandra, Monte Agraça, Socorra, Torres Vedras, and in the rear of Ponte de Rol, rapidly communicated information from one extremity of the line to the other. These signal stations were in charge of seamen from the fleet in the Tagus. To complete the barriers, palisades, platforms, and planked bridges, leading into the works, fifty thousand trees were placed at the disposal of the engineer department, during the three months ending on the 7th of October 1810."

"The cannon in the works were supplied by the Portuguese government. Cars, drawn by oxen, transported twelve-pounders where wheels had never previously rolled. Above three thousand officers and artillerymen of the country assisted in arming the redoubts, and were variously employed in the lines. At one period, exclusive of these, of the British engineers, artificers, or infantry soldiers, seven thousand peasantry worked as labourers in the completion of an undertaking only to have been accomplished under the most favourable circumstances, both with regard to cordiality of assistance, neighbouring arsenals, a British fleet in the Tagus, constant uninterrupted

communication with a great capital, a regular remuneration to the labourers, an anxious and deep interest in the result to be accomplished by the assistance of the works in progress, and, above all, an intelligence and firmness in command that could at the same time extract the greatest benefits from these combinations, and urge exertion where it appeared to relax."

Such was the matchless position to which Wellington retired—and the allied army thus occupied the several posts. Monte Agraça was held by Pack, and a Portuguese brigade. The fifth division encamped on the reverse of the heights, behind the grand redoubt. Hill occupied Alhandra. The light division was posted at Arriada. The first, fourth, and sixth, were at Zibriera, Ribaldiera, and Runa; their right in contact with Leith; their left with Picton — who, with the third division, occupied Torres Vedras, and defended the Zezandra.

RETREAT OF MASSENA.

Massena retires from before the lines. — Falls back upon the frontier. — Operations during the French retreat. — Massena driven from Portugal. — Outrages committed by the French. — British head-quarters established at Villa Formaso.

AFTER a three days' *reconnoissance,* nothing could surpass the chagrin and surprise that Junot exhibited to his staff, when, by personal observation, he had ascertained the full extent of the defences, with which British skill had perfected what Nature had already done so much for. To attempt forcing Torres Vedras, must have ensured destruction ; and nothing remained, but to take a position in its front, and observe that immense chain of posts, which it was found impossible to carry.

During the *reconnoissance* of the French Marshal, an advanced redoubt, held by the 71st, had been furiously assaulted. But the attempt terminated in a severe repulse ; — and in place of carrying the post, the French were driven from a field-work, thrown up upon ground which they called their own. Nor were Massena's surveys of the lines accomplished without at-

tracting observation. The movement of a numerous staff excited the attention of the allies; and, on one occasion, when approaching closer than prudence would warrant, a round-shot fell so near the Marshal's horse, that the *reconnoissance* was terminated most abruptly, and the lines, for the future, were respected.

The Prince of Esling persevered, while any resources could be procured, in remaining before Torres Vedras. But though, by cavalry patrols on the right bank of the Tagus and the detachment of a division to Thomar, he had enlarged the scope of country over which his foragers could operate, supplies failed fast; and even French ingenuity* failed in discovering concealed magazines. Nothing remained but to retire from cantonments where provisions were no longer procurable — on the morning of the 15th, the French army broke up — and, favoured by thick weather, re-

* "The French plundered after the most scientific and approved methods; they used to throw water on suspected places, and watch its absorption, judging that the spot where it dried the quickest had been lately disturbed. No qualms of conscience prevented the orthodox catholic soldiery of the French army from rifling the most sacred places. The communion plate and silver lamps and candlesticks vanished in the twinkling of an eye. Not content with what the churches offered above ground, or from a zeal for antiquarian research, they despised a superficial or traditional account of former modes of burial, and investigated the point by breaking open the tombs."—*Southey.*

tired in beautiful order on Santarem and Torres Novas.

Wellington, on discovering the regressive movement of Massena, promptly despatched a division on either route, and speedily put his whole army in pursuit, leaving the lines secured by a sufficient force. He marched on the routs of the Mondega and the Zezere, it being uncertain by which of these roads the French should retreat from Portugal. The Zezere, however, was supposed to be the line. Hill was pushed over the Tagus, to march on Abrantes; and Lord Wellington, believing that Santarem was occupied only by a rear-guard, notwithstanding the nature of the ground rendered an attack difficult and hazardous, resolved to force it without delay.*

Every disposition was made; but fortunately the allied commander having remarked appearances, which induced him to suspect that recent field-works had been thrown up, on a closer examination detected such powerful means of defence, as occasioned him to countermand the order for advancing. Both armies went into

* Santarem stands on a hill which rises boldly from the banks of the Tagus. The road runs across an open plain, and a causeway that extends nearly eight hundred yards. This is the only approach, one side being surrounded by impassable marshes, and the other, which reaches to the river, by deep ditches overgrown with reeds, which are impracticable for either cavalry or guns.

cantonments; the allies with head-quarters at Cartaxo, — the French having chosen Torres Novas for theirs.

Little of military interest occurred for some time, excepting that the Portuguese militias, under their English officers, were incessant in harassing the French. Grant, with the corps he commanded, obliged Gardanne to fall back with the loss of his baggage, while attempting to protect a convoy of stores and ammunition to the French posts on the Zezere. But this was counterbalanced by a reverse of fortune. Too much excited by success, a part of the Portuguese ordonanza attacked Claparede at Trarnosa. The result was what might have been expected from a collision with regular troops; they were severely checked, and driven with considerable loss across the Douro.

Time passed on,—nothing of moment occurred, — the British remaining quiet, in expectation of a reinforcement of troops from England. A strong *reconnoissance*, however, was made by the French at Rio Mayor, under the command of Junot, who was wounded on the occasion. A period of inaction succeeded—and each army rested in the other's presence.

The first movements that took place were an advance on Punhete by the allies, and the sudden retirement from Santarem of the French. Massena chose the left bank of the Mondego as his

line of retreat, falling back on Guarda and Almeida. Wellington followed promptly; and on the 9th, Massena having halted in front of Pombal, the allies hastened forward to attack him. But the French Marshal declined an action, and fell back, pressed closely by the British light troops, and covered by a splendid rear-guard he had formed from his choicest battalions, and intrusted to the command of Marshal Ney.

At Redinha the French made a daring stand; and though the heights on the left and right were simultaneously carried, Ney resolutely held his ground, until masses of British infantry coming up obliged him to retire. This he effected by the ford and bridge of Redinha, masking his retreat by the fire of his musketry. By this daring halt he secured a start of many hours for the sick and wounded, who were moving on Condeixa with the baggage and field equipage of the army.

Massena continued retiring by Ponte Murcella, while Clausel moved by Ponte Cobreta, and kept his communications open with Loison, and the eighth corps.

Here, Massena had nearly been surprised. Believing himself perfectly secure, he was arranging a leisurely retreat, when the third division, which had passed the mountain by a difficult path, suddenly appeared in the rear of his left. An instant movement was necessary to save himself from

being cut off from the road to Casa Nova; for the rapid advance of the British light troops had nearly succeeded in making Massena himself a prisoner.

The pursuit was actively continued, — in the eagerness of advancing, the light division had been imprudently pushed forward — and in the haze of the morning, the 52nd came unexpectedly in front of an entire corps. Of course, they were briskly attacked; and their being engaged, brought on a general affair, in which the whole light division took part, and thus prevented a flank movement by the third and fourth divisions from being effected, that promised a successful result. Ney retired in beautiful order by echelons of divisions, contesting every bridge and pass; and under a constant fire of horse artillery, and the unremitting pursuit of light troops, retreated safely on Miranda de Corvo, and united himself with the main body and cavalry of Montbrun.

Massena continued his retreat by the line of road between the Mondego and the mountains, while Ney again took a position at Fonte d'Aronce. Lord Wellington attacked him vigorously. The third division, with their usual impetuosity, forced the French left, and the horse artillery completed their disorder. They passed the Ceira in great confusion,—many being trampled down upon the bridge, and more drowned in attempting to cross the river where the water was not fordable.

The casualties on the part of the allies were trifling, but the French loss was estimated at five hundred men.

Ney, having blown up the bridge, necessarily delayed the British advance, while the engineers were throwing another over the Ceira. Immediately, Wellington passed his army over, and Massena had to fall back, and take up a position on the Sierra de Molta. From this, however, he was quickly driven, and obliged to abandon any stores and baggage that were difficult of transport; while a number of his stragglers fell into the hands of the allies and Portuguese irregulars, who incessantly annoyed him by hanging on his route, and threatening his flanks and rear.

Having gained the position of the Guarda, Massena appeared determined to make a stand; but his opponent was equally resolved to expel him from the Portuguese territory, and preparations were made to effect it at daybreak.

The morning was extremely foggy — Beckwith's brigade of the light division prematurely crossed the river, and the rifles, in extended order, and the 43rd in column, mounted the heights. The French pickets were driven in — but when the haze suddenly dispersed, the British light troops found themselves immediately in front of Regnier's entire corps. Colonel Beckwith charged and won the height; but here he was furiously assailed, — and on front and flank, attacked by

overwhelming numbers, while the fire of two guns at musket distance, poured in a deadly discharge of grape shot. Fortunately, a stone enclosure enabled him to obtain a temporary shelter from his assailants, — and the 43rd opened and sustained, from behind the low wall that covered them, a quick and murderous fire.* The remainder of the light division came boldly to the relief of their comrades—and again Beckwith resumed the offensive, and, charging from the enclosure, captured a howitzer that had been advanced by the French to the brow of the hill. The fifth division having carried the bridge of Sabugal, and the third gained ground on Regnier's right flank, obliged him to retire rapidly on Alfayates, leaving the battle ground in possession of the allies.

Had not the action of the Coa sufficiently established the character of the light division, that of Sabugal would have conferred on it a proud and well-deserved distinction. Lord Wellington described it as "one of the most glorious actions that British troops were ever engaged

* "One squadron of dragoons surmounted the ascent, and, with incredible desperation, riding up to the wall, were in the act of firing over it with their pistols, when a rolling volley laid nearly the whole of them lifeless on the ground. By this time, however, a second and a stronger column of infantry had rushed up the face of the hill, endeavouring to break in and retake the howitzer, which was on the edge of the descent and only fifty yards from the wall; but no man could reach it and live, so deadly was the 43rd's fire."—*Napier.*

in,"—and nothing could surpass the extraordinary daring with which a force, so immensely inferior, had not only held its position when for a time isolated and unsupported, but afterwards, becoming assailants, captured and secured the trophy of their victory.

On the 5th of April, Massena crossed the frontier. Portugal was now without the presence of a Frenchman, except the garrison of Almeida, and those who had been taken prisoners in the numerous affairs between the British light troops and the enemy's rear-guard. Nothing could be bolder or more scientific than the whole course of Wellington's operations, from the time he left the lines, until Massena "changed his position from the Zezere to the Agueda."* Yet, it must be admitted, that the French retreat all through was conducted with consummate ability. Ney commanded the rear-guard with excellent judgment; his positions were admirably selected; and when assailed, they were defended as might have been expected from one who had already obtained the highest professional reputation.

In a military view, Massena's retreat was admirable, and reflected infinite credit on the generals who directed it; but, in a moral one, nothing could be more disgraceful. The country over which the retreating columns of the French army

* An ingenious phrase used by the Prince of Esling in his despatches, to evade the plain but unpalatable term of *retreat*.

passed, was marked by bloodshed and devastation. Villages were everywhere destroyed,—property wasted or carried off, — the men shot in sheer wantonness, — the women villanously abused, — while thousands were driven for shelter to the mountains, where many perished from actual want. With gothic barbarity, the fine old city of Leria, and the church and convent of Alcabaca, with its library and relics, were ordered by Massena to be burned. The order was too faithfully executed; and places, for centuries objects of Portuguese veneration, were given to the flames; and those hallowed roofs, beneath which "the sage had studied and the saint had prayed," were reduced to ashes, to gratify a ruthless and vindictive spirit of revenge.

Almeida was closely blockaded, and the headquarters of the allies established at Villa Formosa,* while their brigades were cantoned generally in advance. Finding himself enabled to quit the army for a time, Lord Wellington set out for Alemtejo, to confer with Marshal Beresford, and inspect the detached divisions.

* "Details," &c.

FALL OF BADAJOZ, TO THE BATTLE OF BAROSA.

Badajoz invested.—Death of Menacho.—Fall of the city.—French movements.—Affair at Campo Mayor.—Position of Beresford.—Expedition under Graham.—Battle of Barosa.

BADAJOZ had received an addition to its garrison from some Spanish troops who had escaped the slaughter at Gevora. The fortress was in excellent condition for defence, plentifully supplied with ammunition, and with abundant provisions for its defenders. All, of course, was in favour of its holding out; and Raphael Menacho, an officer of distinguished gallantry, had been appointed governor.

The French broke ground without loss of time, and sate down before the place; while the garrison exhibited the best spirit, and by their bold and frequent sallies, occasioned the greatest annoyance to the besiegers. Menacho retrenched the streets, and made the necessary preparations for a stubborn defence, that equally evinced his ability as an officer and determination as a man.

On the 2nd of March, the French having

pushed their approaches to the covered-way, to enable them to blow down the counterscarp,* the Spanish governor determined on a sally. It was bravely executed, and Menacho, in person, led the sortie. The batteries near the counterscarp were destroyed, the guns spiked, and the works ruined. But, alas! this success was dearly purchased, for the brave veteran was killed in the *mêlée*.

His successor, a dastardly and treacherous villain, obeyed the first summons—and having secured liberty for himself, at once surrendered the fortress. To mark, probably, their own sense of the dishonour this base act of cowardice had entailed upon the garrison, the Spanish workmen were obliged by the French to enlarge the breach, in order to admit the grenadiers to pass through it.

Soult, after the fall of Badajoz, returned to Seville; Mortier marched upon Campo Mayor; and Latour Maubourg occupied Albuquerque and Alcantara with the cavalry. Though but a weak place, and mounted with a few guns, Campo Mayor was bravely defended by a Portuguese officer named Tallia, and only surrendered to the French when a longer resistance was neither prudent nor practicable.

Beresford had received directions from Lord

* The *covered-way* is the space extending round the counterscarp.

The *counterscarp*, the slope of the ditch, facing the body of the place.

Wellington to reduce Badajoz, and relieve Campo Mayor. On the 26th, his advanced guard, consisting of a strong corps of infantry and two thousand British and Portuguese dragoons, appeared before Campo Mayor, as the French were in the very act of retiring from the place, and removing their siege artillery, under the protection of a large body of cavalry and field guns. Colborne marched with the infantry on the right—Head, with the 13th light dragoons and two squadrons of Portuguese, on the left—and the heavy cavalry formed a reserve. Perceiving that their battering train was endangered, the French cavalry, as the ground over which they were retiring was favourable for the movement, charged the 13th. But they were vigorously repulsed; and, failing in breaking the British, the whole, consisting of four regiments, drew up in front, forming an imposing line. The 13th instantly formed and galloped forward—and nothing could have been more splendid than their charge. They rode fairly through the French, overtook and cut down many of the gunners, and at last entirely headed the line of march, keeping up a fierce and straggling encounter with the broken horsemen of the enemy, until some of the English dragoons actually reached the gates of Badajoz, where a few of them were captured.*

* "After receiving the praise his gallantry merited, we have heard that Colonel Head was addressed, 'I believe, Colo-

It was a subject of regret that this dashing exploit of the light cavalry did not receive the support it merited: had the heavy dragoons been vigorously pushed forward, the detachment and their guns must have been necessarily cut off. In the affair, the French lost nearly three hundred men, including a colonel of dragoons — and a howitzer was secured by the British.

Marshal Beresford continued his operations, and made preparations for the investment of Badajoz; Olivenza was reduced; the French nearly expelled from Estremadura; and in a cavalry affair at Santos Maimona, the enemy were charged and broken, with a considerable loss in killed and wounded, and nearly one hundred prisoners.

On the 21st, Lord Wellington arrived—and on the 22nd he passed the Caya with a strong corps of German and Portuguese cavalry, and made a *reconnoissance* of Badajoz. The governor showed him his garrison, — for, to save a convoy that was approaching, he marched all his disposable troops from the town.

To Marshal Beresford a trust of serious responsibility was confided. He had Badajoz to occupy him on one hand, with every reason to expect that Soult would advance, and raise the siege if possible. Under these circumstances a battle

nel, that you would have galloped into Badajoz if the gates had been open.' 'Faith, General, I believe I would,' was the answer."—*A Campaigner.*

might be anticipated; and the Marshal was authorized by Lord Wellington, in the event of his being able to engage the French on fair terms, to accept battle at Albuera.

Another action, by a British general of division, occurred, arising from the attempt of an Anglo-Spanish army to raise the siege of Cadiz. All bade fair for success, as the French had scarcely ten thousand men in their lines, while in the city and Isle of Leon, the Spanish force was more than twenty thousand. On this occasion Graham acted under the command of La Pena,—and eleven thousand allied troops were despatched from Cadiz to Tarifa, to operate against the enemy's rear at Chiclana; while it was arranged that Zayas, who commanded in the Isle of Leon, should pass his troops over San Petri near the sea, and unite in a combined attack.

After much delay, occasioned by tempestuous weather, the troops and artillery were safely assembled at Tarifa on the 27th; and joined by the 28th regiment and the flank companies of the 9th and 82nd, they numbered about four thousand five hundred effective men.

General La Pena arrived the same day with seven thousand Spaniards; and on the next, the united force moved through the passes of the Ronda hills, and halted within four leagues of the French outposts. The commands of the allies were thus distributed,—the vanguard to

Lardizable, the centre to the Prince of Anglona, the reserve to General Graham, and the cavalry to Colonel Whittingham. Victor, though apprized of the activity of the Spaniards, and the march of General Graham, could not correctly ascertain on what point their intended operations would be directed; and therefore, with eleven thousand choice troops, he took post in observation between the roads of Conil and Medina.

On the 2nd, the capture of Casa Viejas increased La Pena's force by sixteen hundred infantry, and a number of guerilla horse. Until the 5th, he continued his movements—and, after his advanced guard had been roughly handled by a squadron of French dragoons, he halted on the Cerro de Puerco, more generally known as the heights of Barosa.

Barosa, though not a high hill, rises considerably above the rugged plain it overlooks, and stands four miles inland from the debouchement of the Santi Petri. The plain is bounded on the right by the forest of Chiclana, on the left by the cliffs on the sea-beach, and on the centre by a pine wood, beyond which the hill of Bermeja rises.

The irregularity and tardiness of the Spanish movements, gave a portentous warning of what might be expected from them in the field. They occupied fifteen hours in executing a moderate march, passing over the ground in a rambling and

disorderly manner, that seemed rather like peasants wandering from a fair, than troops moving in the presence of an enemy. La Pena, without waiting to correct his broken ranks, sent on a vanguard to Zayas; while his rear, entirely separated from the centre, was still straggling over the country, — and contrary to the expressed wishes of Graham, who implored him to hold Barosa, he declined his advice, and ordered the British to march through the pine wood on Bermeja. Graham, supposing that Anglona's division and the cavalry would continue to occupy the hill, leaving the flank companies of the 9th and 82nd to protect his baggage, obeyed the order, and commenced his march. But the astonishment of the English General was unbounded, when, on entering the wood, he saw La Pena moving his entire corps from the heights of Barosa, with the exception of three or four battalions and as many pieces of artillery.

Unfortunately, the English General was not the only person who had observed that Barosa was abandoned. Victor, concealed in the forest of Chicalana, anxiously watched the movements of the allies. He saw the fatal error committed by the Spanish leader — and instantly made dispositions to profit from the ignorance and obstinacy of his antagonist.

The French Marshal, having selected three grenadier battalions as reserves, strengthened his

left wing with two, and three squadrons of cavalry, while the other was attached to his centre. Ruffin commanded the left, Laval the centre; while Villatte, with two thousand five hundred infantry, covered the camp, and watched the Spaniards at St. Petri and Bermeja. The cavalry, stationed at Medina and Arcos, were ordered by Victor to move on Vejer and cut off the allies, for on their certain defeat the French General entertained no doubt.

The time was admirably chosen for a decisive movement. The British corps were defiling through the wood—the strength of the Spaniards posted on the Bermeja—another division pursued a straggling march on Vejer—and a fourth, in great confusion, was at Barosa, as a protection for the baggage. Making Villatte's division a pivot, Victor pushed Laval at once against the British,—and ascending the back of the hill with Ruffin's brigade, he threw himself between the Spaniards and Medina, dispersed the camp followers in an instant, and captured the guns and baggage.

Graham, when apprised of this sudden and unexpected movement, countermarched directly on the plain, to co-operate, as he believed, with La Pena, whom he calculated on finding on the heights. Never was reliance placed by a brave soldier on a more worthless ally. The Spaniard had deceived him—himself was gone—his mob-

soldiery were fugitives—Ruffin on the heights—the French cavalry between him and the sea—and Laval close on the left flank of the British.

It was indeed a most perilous situation—and in that extremity, the brave old man to whom the British had been fortunately confided, proved himself worthy of the trust. He saw the ruin of retreat,—safety lay in daring—and though the enemy held the key of the position with fresh troops, Graham boldly determined to attack them with his wearied ones.

The battle was instantly commenced. Duncan's artillery opened a furious cannonade on the column of Laval; and Colonel Barnard, with the rifles and Portuguese Caçadores, extended to the left and began firing. The rest of the British troops formed two masses, without regard to regiments or brigades; one, under General Dilkes, marched direct against Ruffin,—and the other, under Colonel Whately, boldly attacked Laval. On both sides the guns poured a torrent of grape and canister over the field; the infantry kept up a withering fire; and both sides advanced, for both seemed anxious to bring the contest to an issue. Whately, when the lines approached, came forward to the charge—he drove the first line on the second, and routed both with slaughter.

Brown had marched at once on Ruffin, and though half his small number had been annihilated by an overwhelming fire, he held his ground

till Dilkes came to his assistance. Never pausing to correct their formation, which the rugged hill had considerably disorganized, on came the British desperately — they were still struggling to attain the summit—and approaching the ridge, breathless and disordered, their opponents advanced to meet them. A furious combat, hand to hand, ensued — for a moment victory seemed doubtful—but the British fought with a ferocity that nothing could oppose. Whole sections went down, but still the others pressed forward. Ruffin and Rousseau, who commanded the *élite* of the grenadiers, fell mortally wounded. The British never paused, on they went, delivering volley after volley, forcing the French over the heights, and defeating them with the loss of their guns.

The divisions of Victor, though dreadfully cut up, fell back on each other for mutual support, and endeavoured to rally — but Duncan's guns were moved forward, and opened a close and murderous fire tha prevented a possibility of reforming. Nothing could save the shattered battalions from that exterminating cannonade but an instant retreat — and Victor retired, leaving the British in undisputed possession of the field, from which want of food and continued fatigue, while under arms for four-and-twenty hours, of course prevented them from moving in pursuit.

Never was there a shorter — never a bloodier conflict. Though it lasted scarcely an hour and-

a-quarter, out of the handful of British troops engaged, a loss was sustained of fifty officers, sixty sergeants, and eleven hundred rank and file. The French, besides two thousand killed and wounded, lost six guns, an eagle, and two generals, with nearly five hundred prisoners.

Nothing could exceed the dastardly duplicity with which the Spanish general abandoned his gallant ally. La Pena never made a movement towards the succour of the British—and although the French cavalry scarcely exceeded two hundred men, and the Spanish, under Whittingham, amounted to more than six, the latter never drew a sabre. Never was there a finer field for cavalry to act on with effect—Ruffin's left was perfectly open—and even a demonstration of attack must have turned defeat to ruin. Three troops of German hussars, under Ponsonby, reached the field at the close of the battle, just as the beaten divisions were attempting to unite. They charged through the French squadrons, overthrew them, captured two guns, and sabred many of Ruffin's grenadiers, while endeavouring to regain their ranks.

To paint the character of Barosa in a few words, Napier's will best describe it. "The contemptible feebleness of La Pena, furnished a surprising contrast to the heroic vigour of Graham,* whose attack was an inspiration rather than a resolution—so wise, so sudden was the decision, so swift, so conclusive was the execution."

* "Details," &c.

BATTLE OF FUENTES D'ONORO.

Massena takes the field.—Attempts to relieve Almeida.—Lord Wellington prevents it.—Battle of Fuentes d'Onoro.

The army of Portugal, reinforced by that of the north, and two divisions of the ninth corps, mustering forty thousand infantry, and nearly four thousand horse, quitted their cantonments; while Wellington, apprised of this concentration, hastened from the south to Formosa, and resumed the command of the allies, whose force might be computed at thirty-two thousand infantry, and one thousand five hundred cavalry.

Massena's great object in taking the field again, was to raise the blockade of Almeida, then closely invested by Lord Wellington; while the English commander, determined that this important fortress should not be relieved, resolved, even on unfavourable ground and with an inferior force, to risk a battle.

The river Coa flows past Almeida—its banks are dangerous and steep, and its points of passage

few. Beside the bridge of the city, there is a second, seven miles up the stream, at Castello Bom; and a third, twenty miles farther still, at Sabugal. To fight with the river in his rear was hazardous; but Wellington had decided on his course of action, and accordingly selected the best position which a country of no great military strength would afford.

The Duas Casas runs in a northerly course, nearly parallel with the Coa, having on its left bank the village of Fuentes d'Onoro. It is a sweet hamlet, and prettily situated in front of a sloping hill of easy access, here and there intersprinkled with woods of cork and ilex. The village was a feature of considerable military importance, the channel of the Duas Casas being rocky and broken, and its banks generally steep. Fuentes was occupied by the light troops—the third division posted on a ridge crossing the road to Villa Formosa—the brigades of Crawford and Campbell formed behind the village of Alameda, to observe the bridge over the Duas Casas—Pack's division observed Almeida closely, and shut in the garrison—Erskine held the great road that crosses the Duas Casas by a ford—while the guerilla cavalry were placed in observation, two miles on the right, at the village of Nava-de-Aver. The position was very extensive, covering, from flank to flank, a surface of nearly six miles.

The military attitude which the allied commander held, compared with that of the preceding year, was singularly changed. Then, his being able to maintain himself in the country was more than questionable; now, and in the face of those corps who had driven him on Torres Vedras, he stood with a divided force—and while two sieges were being carried on, he protected the great roads, by which the divisions who conducted them were secured; and, as results best proved, attempted nothing beyond what he had means and talents to effect.

On the 1st and 2nd of May, Massena, with an immense convoy, passed the rivers Agueda and Azava, with the intention of relieving Almeida, and providing it with every means for ensuring a protracted defence. On the 3rd, in the evening, the French sixth corps appeared on the heights above Fuentes d'Onoro, and commenced a lively cannonade, followed up by a furious assault upon the village. The light companies, who held Fuentes, sustained the attack bravely, until they were supported by the 71st, and, as the affair grew warmer, by the 79th and 24th. Colonel Williams was wounded—and the command devolving on Colonel Cameron, he remedied a temporary disorder that had been occasioned by the fall of several officers, and again restored the battle. The ground for a time gained by the French was inch by inch recovered; and, probably, dur-

ing the Peninsular conflicts, a closer combat was never maintained, as, in the main street particularly, the rival troops fought fairly hand to hand.

The French were finally expelled from the village. Night was closing; undismayed by a heavy loss, and unwearied by a hardly-contested action, a cannon, as it appeared to be, being seen on the adjacent heights, the 71st dashed across the rivulet, and bearing down all resistance, reached and won the object of their enterprise. On reaching it, the Highlanders discovered that in the haze of evening they had mistaken a tumbrel for a gun—but they bore it off, a trophy of their gallantry.

The British regiments held the village. The next day passed quietly over, while Massena carefully reconnoitred the position of his opponent. It was suspected that he intended to change his plan of attack, and manœuvre on the right; and to secure that flank, Houston's division was moved to Posa Velha, the ground there being weak, and the river fordable. As had been anticipated, favoured by the darkness, Massena "marched his troops bodily to the left,"* placing his whole cavalry, with Junot's corps, right in front of Houston's division. A correspondent movement was consequently made; Spencer's and Picton's divisions moved to the right, and Crawford, with the cavalry, marched to support Houston.

* Narrative by Colonel Jones.

At daybreak the attack was made. Junot carried the village of Posa Velha, and the French cavalry drove in that of the allies. But the infantry, supported by the horse artillery, repulsed the enemy and drove them back with loss.

A difficult and a daring change of position was now required; and Lord Wellington, abandoning his communication with the bridge at Sabugal, retired his right, and formed line at right angles with his first formation, extending from the Duas Casas toward Frenada on the Coa.

This necessary operation obliged the seventh and light divisions, in the face of a bold and powerful cavalry, to retire nearly two miles; and it required all the steadiness and rapidity of British light infantry to effect the movement safely. Few as the British cavalry were, they charged the enemy frequently, and always with success; while the horse artillery sustained their well-earned reputation, acting with a boldness that at times almost exposed them to certain capture. Ramsay's troop was at one time actually cut off, but by the bravery of the men and the superior quality of his horses, he galloped through the surrounding hussars, and carried off his battery. The infantry, in squares of battalions, repelled every charge; while the Chasseurs Brittanique kept up a flanking fire, that while the retrogression of the British was being effected, entailed

a considerable loss on the assailants who were pressing them closely.

The new position of the British was most formidable. The right appuyed upon a hill, topped by an ancient tower, and the alignement was so judiciously taken up, that Massena did not venture to assail it.

While these operations were going on, a furious attack was repeated on Fuentes d'Onoro. Infantry, cavalry, and artillery, all were brought to bear—a tremendous cannonade opened on the devoted village, and the assault was made at the same moment on flanks and front together. Desperate fighting in the streets and churchyard took place. The French feeding the attacking troops with fresh numbers, pressed the three regiments,* that held the upper village, severely;—but after one of the closest and most desperate combats that has ever been maintained, a bayonet charge of the 88th decided the contest;† and the assailants, notwithstanding their vastly superior force, were driven with prodigious slaughter from Fuentes; the upper village remaining in possession of its gallant defenders, and the lower in "the silent occupation of the dead."

Evening closed the combat. Massena's columns on the right were halted—and his sixth division, with which he had endeavoured to

* 74th, 83rd, and 88th. † "Details," &c.

storm Fuentes d'Onoro, withdrawn — the whole French army bivouacking in the order in which they had stood when the engagement closed. The British lighted their fires, arranged their pickets, and occupied the field they had so bravely held; and "both parties lay down to rest, with a confident assurance on their minds, that the battle was only intermitted till the return of daylight."

A brigade of the light division relieved the brave defenders of Fuentes,* and preparatory to the expected renewal of attack, they threw up some works to defend the upper village and the ground behind it. But these precautions were unnecessary; Massena remained for the next day in front of his antagonist, but exhibited no anxiety to renew the combat. The 7th found the British, as usual, under arms at dawn, but the

* The French officers were censured for continuing these attacks on the village, instead of assailing the right. "At Fuentes d'Onoro the British army stood, after the right wing was thrown back, on perfectly open and level ground, one point only resting on the strong village in question; yet was that strong point constantly attacked, while the army was left totally unassailed. At Albuera the French employed the whole of Godinot's division of infantry in the attack of the village that gives its name to the battle; yet, when evacuated by Alten's brigades, it proved of no use whatever, for the battle was fought and decided on open ground, at the other extremity of the field, where an entire division of infantry would probably have turned the fate of the day."—*Raoul.*

day passed as quietly as the preceding one had done. On the 8th, however, the French columns were observed in full retreat, marching on the road to Ciudad Rodrigo. Massena, with an army reinforced by every battalion and squadron he could collect from Gallicia and Castile, had been completely beaten by a wing of the British army, consisting of three divisions only. With that unblushing assurance, for which the French Marshals have been remarkable, of changing defeat into conquest, Massena did not hesitate to call Fuentes d'Onoro a victory. But the object for which the battle was fought was unattained. He failed in succouring the beleaguered city—and Almeida was left to its fate.

In a close and sanguinary contest, like that of Fuentes d'Onoro, the loss on both sides must necessarily be immense. The British had two hundred killed, one thousand and twenty-eight wounded, and two hundred and ninety-four missing. The French suffered much more heavily ; and it was computed that nearly five thousand of Massena's army were rendered *hors de combat.* In the lower village of Fuentes alone two hundred dead bodies were reckoned.

In the conduct of an affair which terminated so gloriously for the divisions engaged, the system of defence adopted by Lord Wellington was very masterly. Every arm of his force was happily employed, and all were well combined for

mutual protection. Massena had every advantage for arranging his attack. Thick woods in front enabled him to form his columns unseen — and until the moment of their débouchement, none could tell their strength, or guess the place on which they were about to be directed. Hence the French Marshal had the means of pouring a mass of infantry on any point he pleased, and making a serious impression before troops could be moved forward to meet and repel the assault. His superiority in cavalry and artillery was great. He might, under a cannonade that the British guns could not have answered, have brought forward his cavalry *en masse*, supported by columns of infantry,—and the allied line, under a masked movement of this kind, would in all probability have been penetrated. Or, by bringing his cavalry round the right of the British flank, and crossing the Coa, he would have obliged Lord Wellington to pass the river under the greatest disadvantages. Indeed this was apprehended on the 5th — and there was but one alternative, either to raise the blockade of Almeida or relinquish the Sabugal road. The latter was done. "It was a bold measure, but it was not adopted without due consideration; and it received an ample reward in the successful termination of this hard-fought battle."

BRENNIER'S ESCAPE—AND SUBSEQUENT OPERATIONS.

Almeida closely blockaded.—Brennier destroys the works and makes preparations for escaping—Breaks out from the fortress, and succeeds. — Badajoz invested. — Progress of the siege. — Interrupted by Soult's advance. — Beresford raises the siege—Unites with the Spanish army under Blake, and takes a position at Albuera.—Numbers of the rival armies.—Their composition.—Remarks.

ALTHOUGH the French moved so slowly on the Rodrigo road during the 9th, that it seemed a doubtful point whether this dubious retreat did not mask some other plan of Massena against the British position — the morning of the 10th dispelled all anxiety on that head—for then it was ascertained, that nothing but a few cavalry pickets remained on the line of the Azava.

Wellington, liberated from all fear of present annoyance, after strengthening the position at Fuentes with field-works, resumed the blockade of Almeida. To the sixth division, under General Campbell, that duty was intrusted — for, unfortunately, as the event turned out, that officer

asked and obtained permission to reduce the place.

Too great confidence, either in the allied strength or the weakness of the garrison, most probably led him to adopt an imperfect system of blockade, which led to mortifying results. His dispositions were entirely erroneous. It is true that the right face of Almeida was vigilantly watched — but there, no movements could have been made with any prospect of succeeding. The left unfortunately was disregarded—and the banks of the Aqueda, and bridge of Barba del Puerco, on the direct route to the French outposts, were left unguarded. This oversight was generally noticed—and though the blockade of the fortress had been in the first instance unreservedly confided to Campbell, the faulty method of his dispositions obliged Lord Wellington to order the division of Sir William Erskine to march and observe the left face of Almeida. But this was not effected in proper time—and a delay in the transmission of the orders, produced a very annoying result, and enabled the French garrison to get away.

Massena, on crossing the Agueda, finding every effort to relieve the fortress impracticable, abandoned it to its fate, resigning the object for which he had sacrificed five thousand men, and thus losing his last hold in Portugal. He transmitted orders to Brennier by a private soldier, who with

great tact avoided the British posts and reached Almeida safely. In these, the governor was directed to dismantle the works, quit the fortress in silence, force his way through the pickets, and march on Barba del Puerco, where a division of French cavalry and infantry would be ready to protect him.

The successful issue of the attempt, beleaguered as Almeida was by a force of such strength as the allied army, appeared a hopeless task; but to the brave nothing is impossible, and the bold movement of Brennier obtained the good fortune which it deserved. Instantly, he proceeded to destroy the works — and wasted the ammunition, spiked the guns, or more effectually destroyed them, by discharging one cannon into another. Frequent explosions were heard during the 8th and 9th, announcing that the work of destruction was proceeding. This, however, was only believed to be an act preparatory to an unconditional surrender— and this added to the ill-judged confidence of the general, who was intrusted with the observation of the town.

On the evening of the 10th the French governor assembled his superior officers, communicated Massena's instructions, and then issued his own. The soldiers were ordered to quit the town at ten o'clock—march in profound silence—and no matter what circumstance should occur, they were directed to receive the fire of the besiegers with-

out returning a shot. By daylight Brennier calculated that they should have reached the bridge —but if delayed by accident, or attacked in force, the way was to be opened with the bayonet. The night march was pointed out from the ramparts — and at eleven o'clock, under cover of an immense explosion, the brave band left the ruined fortress, and guided by the stars, pushed boldly for the French lines.

The springing of the mines was not particularly attended to—for on the preceding nights similar explosions had been heard. But suddenly a report was spread that Almeida was deserted—and that the garrison, with Brennier at their head, were marching rapidly on Barba del Puerco.

The pickets of Pack's brigade were at Malpartada; and that general, in visiting his out-posts, first ascertained the escape of the French, and gave an alarm. It was now too late — the first picket that opposed the garrison of Almeida had been bayoneted—and pushing through the others, who could offer but trifling opposition, Brennier marched rapidly on. Pack sent immediately to apprise Campbell of the occurrence, and in person hung on the enemy's rear, indicating the line of the retreat by the flashes of his musketry, which were constantly kept up. Campbell, though he hurried to the point, appears to have issued no distinct orders, that would have produced an instant pursuit. The 4th regiment endeavoured to head the

retreating column — but it marched too rapidly to be overtaken. Brennier's orders were strictly obeyed — the column hurried on—and not a shot was fired until it reached the Aqueda.

There the French halted for their stragglers to come up, and they had also diverged a little to the left of the proper route. These delays enabled the 2nd, 4th, and 36th, who had thrown aside their knapsacks, to overtake them in the act of crossing the bridge at Puerco. In passing, they were exposed to a heavy fire, by which they lost one hundred men—while some squadrons of the Royals, and Pack's Portuguese light troops, captured ten officers and upwards of two hundred men.

The retreat of the garrison from Almeida, was admirably planned and bravely executed. Three-fourths of the number were saved—and the doubt is, whether Massena's astonishment or Wellington's annoyance, at Brennier's escape, was the greater. Indeed, fewer prosperous results succeeded the battle of Fuentes d'Onoro than might have been reasonably looked for. But such events are ever occurring, and form the proverbial uncertainty of *la fortune de la guerre.*

A general order of Lord Wellington, in alluding to this singular escape, sensibly remarks — "Officers of the army may depend upon it, that the enemy to whom they are opposed, is not less prudent than powerful." The extreme ability

with which Brennier had contrived not only to ruin the works,* but pass his garrison in close column through the quarters of the reserves, proved the truth of Lord Wellington's estimate of the military ability of his opponents. Lord Londonderry, in noticing Brennier's exploit, says, "Not that we very deeply regretted the escape of the individuals; they were brave men, had made a bold venture, and deserved that it should be crowned with success." A remark we should have expected from a man, himself a stout and dashing officer.

While Lord Wellington had been obliged to return to the north, in consequence of Massena's movements for the relief of Almeida, Beresford endeavoured to reduce Badajoz, and selected, as its weakest point, the junction of the Rivellas with the Guadiana, where the defences were restricted to a simple wall in front of the castle that commands the town. The Marshal had hopes from the engineers, that the place might be taken in twelve or fourteen days. Preparations for the siege were made; bridges laid across the Guadiana on the 23rd—and the next

* "He ruined all the principal bastions, and kept up a constant fire of the artillery in a singular manner, for always he fired several guns at one moment with very heavy charges, placing one across the muzzle of another, so that, while some shots flew towards the besiegers, and a loud explosion was heard, others destroyed pieces without attracting notice."—*Napier.*

day appointed for a close investment of the fortress. That evening, unfortunately, the weather changed suddenly—the flood rose—the river in one night increased perpendicularly seven feet—and sweeping the bridges totally away, the materials were borne down the stream, and the communications with Portugal completely interrupted.

Another bridge was hastily constructed. On the 8th, ground was broken, and notwithstanding the rocky surface, moonlight, and the exposed situation on which the working parties were employed, occasioned heavy loss, a breaching battery opened on San Christoval on the 11th at daybreak. Its operation was found very indifferent. The Portuguese gunners who manned the batteries were, from their inexperience, unable to produce effect; the guns, also, were defective*—and the firing of a few hours left them, with one exception, totally unserviceable.

At this time, intelligence reached the Marshal, that Soult was marching from Larena. Beresford, of course, at once abandoned the siege, removed the artillery and stores, and having united himself with Blake, Castanos, and Ballasteros, the combined armies took position behind the Albuera, where the Seville and Olivença roads separate.

On the westward of the ground where the

* "Details," &c.

allies determined to abide a battle, the surface undulated gently—and on the summit, and parallel with the river, their divisions were drawn up. The village of Albuera was in front of the left, and the right was formed on a succession of knolls, none of them of any strength, and having no particular appui. On the eastern side of the river, an open country extends for a considerable distance, terminating in thick woods; and in these, Soult bivouacked on the night of the 15th, and there made his dispositions for attack.

The French army, though numerically weaker, was composed of veteran troops, and amounted to twenty thousand infantry, three thousand cavalry, and forty pieces of cannon. The allies numbered twenty-seven thousand infantry, two thousand cavalry, and thirty-two guns; but of this force, fourteen thousand were Spanish.

These last were formed in a double line upon the right — Stewart's division was in the centre — a Portuguese division on the left. The light infantry, under Alten, held the village—and the dragoons, under Lumley, were placed on the right flank of the Spaniards. Cole's division (the fusileers) and a Portuguese brigade, came up after the action commenced, and formed in rear of the centre.

Never did the *matériel* of an army so completely compensate for its inferior numbers as

that of the Duke of Dalmatia. What though his infantry was weaker by eight or even ten thousand, his were among the finest battalions in the service of Napoleon. His cavalry was a third stronger, and his artillery more numerous and efficient. Beresford's was a medley of three nations. Though he had thirty thousand men in position, not a fourth was British; while nearly one-half was composed of that worst of military mobs—the Spaniards. Nor were these even brought up in time to admit of their being properly posted. Blake had promised that his corps should be on the hill of Albuera before noon on the 15th—and with but a few miles to march, and excellent roads to traverse, the head of his columns reached the ground near midnight, and the rear at three on the morning of the 16th. Bad as Beresford's army was, had it been in hand, more might have been done with it. It was three o'clock on the 16th before Blake was fairly up, and six before the fourth division reached the ground; while three fine British regiments under Kemmis, and Madden's Portuguese cavalry, never appeared; while, as the event showed, a few British soldiers would have proved invaluable, these troops, though immediately contiguous during the long and doubtful struggle that ensued, remained *non-combatant.*

BATTLE OF ALBUERA.

Soult attacks the Spaniards.—Progress of the battle.—French defeated.—Remarks on Marshal Beresford.—Blake's conduct.—Soult retreats.—Badajoz invested.

BERESFORD'S position had been carefully reconnoitred by Soult on the evening of the 15th, and aware that the fourth British division was still before Badajoz, and Blake not yet come up, he determined to attack the Marshal without delay. A height, commanding the Valverde road, if a front attack were made, appeared, on his examination of the ground, to be the key of the position; and as Beresford had overlooked its occupation, Soult ably selected it as the point by which his principal effort should be made.

A wooded hill behind the Albuera within cannon-shot of the allied right, afforded the French Marshal the means of forming a strong column for attack, without his design being noticed by his opponent. Covered by the darkness, he brought forward the artillery of Ruty, the fifth corps under Girard, with the cavalry of Latour Maubourg, and formed them for his in-

tended assault; "thus concentrating fifteen thousand men and forty guns within ten minutes march of Beresford's right wing, and yet that General could neither see a man, nor draw a sound conclusion as to the real plan of attack."* The remainder of his corps was placed in the wood on the banks of the Feria, to bear against Beresford's left, and by carrying the bridge and village sever the wings of the allied army.

The engagement commenced by Godinot debouching from the wood, and making a feint on the left, while the main body of the French ascended the heights on the right of the Spaniards. On perceiving the true object of Soult's attack, Beresford, who had vainly endeavoured, through an aid-de-camp, to persuade Blake to change his front, rode to the Spanish post, pointed out the heads of the advancing columns, and induced his ally to take up a new alignement. It was scarcely done until the French bore down upon the Spanish infantry; and though at first they were stoutly opposed, the battalions gradually began to yield ground; and, being farther forced back, Soult commenced deploying on the most commanding point of the position. A serious attack was to be dreaded; the French cavalry sweeping round the allies, threatened their rear—and Godinot's column made fresh demonstrations of vigorously assailing the left.

* Napier.

All this was most alarming; — the Spanish line confusedly endeavouring to effect the difficult manœuvre of changing its front, while two-thirds of the French, in compact order of battle, were preparing to burst upon the disordered ranks, and insure their total destruction. The French guns had opened a furious cannonade,— the infantry were firing volley after volley,—the cavalry charging where the Spanish battalions seemed most disordered. Already their ranks were wavering—and Soult, determined to complete the ruin he had begun, ordered up the reserve, and advanced all his batteries.

At this perilous moment, when the day seemed lost, General Stewart pushed the leading brigade of the fourth division up the hill under Colonel Colborne, and it mounted by columns of companies. To form line on gaining the top, under a withering fire, was difficult; and while in the act of being effected, a mist, accompanied by a heavy fall of rain, shut every object out from view, and enabled the whole of the light cavalry of Godinot's division to sweep round the right flank, and gallop in on the rear of the companies at the time they were in loose deployment. Half the brigade was cut to pieces; the 31st, who were still fortunately in column, alone escaping the lancers, who with little resistance were spearing right and left a body of men surprised on an open flat, and wanting the necessary

formation which alone enables infantry to resist a charge of horse.

This scene of slaughter, by a partial dispersion of the smoke and fog that hitherto concealed the battle-ground, was fortunately observed by General Lumley, and he ordered the British cavalry to gallop to the relief of the remnant of Colborne's brigade. They charged boldly; and, in turn, the lancers were taken in rear, and many fell beneath the sabres of the English.

The weather, that had caused the destruction of the British regiments, obscured the field of battle, and prevented Soult from taking an immediate advantage, and exterminating that half-ruined brigade. Stewart brought up Houghton's corps; the artillery had come forward, and opened a furious cannonade on the dense masses of the French; and the 31st resolutely maintained its position on the height. Two Spanish brigades were advanced, and the action became hotter than ever. For a moment the French battalions recoiled, but it was only to rally instantly, and come on with greater fury. A raging fire of artillery on both sides, sustained at little more than pistol range, with reiterated volleys of musketry, heaped the field with dead, while the French were vainly endeavouring to gain ground, and the British would not yield them an inch. But the ranks of the island soldiery were thinning fast, — their ammunition

was nearly exhausted, — their fire slackened, — and notwithstanding the cannonade checked the French movement for a time, Soult formed a column on the right flank of the British, and the lancers* charging furiously again, drove off the artillery men and captured six guns. All now seemed lost — a retreat appeared inevitable. The Portuguese were preparing to cover it, and the Marshal was about to give the order, when Colonel Harding suggested that another effort should be made, " boldly ordered General Cole to advance, and then riding to Colonel Abercrombie, who commanded the remaining brigade of the second division, directed him also to push forward into the fight."†

The order was instantly obeyed, — General Harvey, with the Portuguese regiments of the fourth division, moved on between the British cavalry and the hill ; and though charged home by the French dragoons, he checked them by a heavy fire and pushed forward steadily ; and General Cole led on the 7th and 23rd fusileers in person.

* Marshal Beresford was furiously attacked by one of these desperadoes, who, under the influence of brandy, were riding recklessly about the field, and doing an infinity of mischief. The Marshal seized the lancer's spear, unhorsed him by sheer strength, and his orderly dragoon despatched him by a *coup de sabre.*

† Napier.

In a few minutes more the remnant of the British must have abandoned the hill or perished. The French reserve was on its march to assist the front column of the enemy, while with the allies all was in confusion; and as if the slaughter required increase, a Spanish and English regiment were firing in mutual mistake upon each other. Six guns were in possession of the French, and their lancers riding furiously over the field, threatened the feeble remnant of the British still in line, and speared the wounded without mercy. At this fearful moment the boundless gallantry of British officers displayed itself; Colonel Arbuthnot, under the double musketry, rushed between the mistaken regiments, and stopped the firing; Cole pushed up the hill, scattered the lancers, recovered the guns, and passed the right of the skeleton of Haughton's brigade, at the same instant that Abercrombie appeared upon its left. Leaving the broken regiments in its rear, the fusileer brigade came forward with imposing gallantry, and boldly confronted the French, now reinforced by a part of its reserve, and who were, as they believed, coming forward to annihilate the "feeble few" that had still survived the murderous contest. From the daring attitude of the fresh regiments, Soult perceived, too late, that the battle was not yet won; and, under a tremendous fire of artillery, he endeavoured to break up his close formation and extend his front.

For a moment the storm of grape, poured from Ruty's well-served artillery, staggered the fusileers,—but it was only for a moment. Though Soult rushed into the thickest of the fire, and encouraged and animated his men,—though the cavalry gathered on their flank and threatened it with destruction, on went those noble regiments; volley after volley falling into the crowded ranks of their enemy, and cheer after cheer pealing to Heaven, in answer to the clamorous outcry of the French, as the boldest urged the others forward.

Nothing could check the fusileers; they kept gradually advancing, while the incessant rolling of their musketry slaughtered the crowded sections of the French, and each moment embarrassed more and more Soult's efforts to open out his encumbered line. The reserve, coming to support their comrades, now forced to the very edge of the plateau, increased the crowd without remedying the disorder. The English volleys rolled on faster and more deadly than ever; a horrid carnage made all attempts to hold the hill vain, and uselessly increased an unavailing slaughter. Unable to bear the withering fire, the shattered columns of the French were no longer able to sustain themselves, — the mass were driven over the ridge, — and trampling each other down, the shattered column sought refuge at the bottom of the hill.

On that bloody height stood the conquerors. From fifteen hundred muskets a parting volley fell upon the routed column as it hurried down the Sierra. Where was the remainder of the proud army of England, that on the morning had exceeded six thousand combatants?—Stretched coldly in the sleep of death, or bleeding on the battle ground!

During the time this desperate effort of the fusileer brigade had been in progress, Beresford, to assist Harvey, moved Blake's first line on Albuera, and with the German light troops, and two Portuguese divisions, advanced to support the 7th and 23rd, while Lautour Maubourg's flank attack was repelled by the fire of Lefebre's guns, and a threatened charge by Lumley. But the fusileers had driven the French over the heights before any assistance reached them — and Beresford was enabled to form a fresh line upon the hill, parallel to that by which Soult had made his attack in the morning. For a short time the battle continued at Albuera, but the French finally withdrew from the village, and at three o'clock in the evening the firing had totally ceased.

There is not on record a bloodier struggle. In four hours' fighting, fifteen thousand men were *hors de combat.* The allied loss was frightful; it amounted to nearly seven thousand in killed, wounded, and missing. Almost all its field officers were included in the melancholy list:

Houghton, Myers, and Duckworth in the killed; and Cole, Stewart, Ellis, Blakeney, and Hawkshaw among the wounded. The loss of some regiments was terrible; the 57th entered into action with five hundred and seventy bayonets, and at the close it had lost its colonel (Inglis), twenty-two officers, and four hundred rank and file. The proportion of the allied casualties told how fatal Albuera had proved to the British: two thousand Spaniards, and six hundred German and Portuguese, were returned as their killed and wounded, leaving the remainder to be completed from the British regiments. Hence, the unexampled loss of more than four thousand men, out of a corps little exceeding six, was sustained in this sanguinary battle by the British.

Never was more heroism displayed than by the British regiments engaged in the murderous conflict of Albuera. The soldiers dropped by whole ranks, but never thought of turning. When a too ardent wish to succour those pressed upon the hill, induced Stewart to hurry Colborne's brigade into action, without allowing it a momentary pause to halt and form,—and in the mist, that unluckily favoured the lancer charge, the companies were unexpectedly assailed,—though fighting at dreadful disadvantage, the men resisted to the last. Numbers perished by the lance-blade; but still the dead Poles, that were found intermingled

with the fallen English, shewed that the gallant islanders had not died without exacting blood for blood.

The French exceeded the British by at least a thousand. Of their worst wounded, eight hundred were left on the field. Their loss in superior officers, like that of the British, had been most severe — two generals having been killed, and three severely wounded.

To a victory both sides laid claim—the French resting theirs on the capture of some colours, the taking of a howitzer, with some five hundred prisoners whom they had secured unwounded. But the British kept the battle-ground; and though neither cannon nor eagle remained with them, a field covered with carcases, and heaped with bleeding enemies, were the best trophies of their valour, and clearly established to whom conquest in reality belonged.

Much military controversy has arisen from the fight of Albuera, and Marshal Beresford has received some praise and more censure. Probably the battle should not have been fought at all; or, if it were unavoidable, greater care might have been bestowed in taking the positions, and, certainly, the investment of Badajoz should not have been continued so long. Much, however, can be urged in favour of Marshal Beresford. His was a most embarrassing command, and he had numerous and unexpected difficulties to contend with. Op-

posed to him was one of the ablest of Napoleon's generals, and an army formed of the finest *matériel,* complete in every arm, and under the orders of the best officers of France. How differently was his force constructed:—a small portion of the whole were British; on another part, the Portuguese, a fair reliance might be placed; but the half of his army were an ill-commanded and ill-disciplined force, half-starved, half-armed, worn down by fatigue, and beaten repeatedly by the very troops they were again obliged to encounter. Little dependence could be placed on such worthless levies — as little on their stubborn commander. When the real attack of the French Marshal was apparent to everybody, Blake, with proverbial obstinacy, refused to alter his formation until his clumsy battalions had not sufficient time to change their front, and the French columns were actually mounting the hill to attack him. This was bad enough, yet, after all, it was but an error of the head. But the man was radically worthless. When Beresford's pickets had been established for the night, the British brigades were so miserably reduced, that they could not furnish men to carry off the wounded. In this wretched situation, when an enemy would have freely succoured him, Beresford despatched Harding to his ally, to beg him to lend assistance; and the brutal answer of the Spaniard was, "that each of the allied powers

must take care of its own wounded;" and he declined extending the least relief to these heroic sufferers, who, by a prodigal expenditure of their blood, alone had saved his sluggish legions from extermination.

If Beresford's judgment is open to censure, his personal intrepidity must be admitted and admired. No man could make greater exertions to retrieve the day when defeat was all but certain. When Stewart's imprudence in loosely bringing Colborne's brigade into action, had occasioned it a loss only short of total annihilation, — and the Spaniards, though they could not be induced to advance, fired without ceasing, with an English regiment in their front, Beresford actually seized an ensign and dragged him forward with the colours, hoping that these worthless troops would be inspirited to follow. Not a man stirred— and the standard-bearer, when the Marshal's grasp relaxed, instantly flew back to herd with his cold-blooded associates. In every change of the fight, and on every part of the field, Beresford was seen conspicuously; and whatever might have been his failing as a general, his bravery as a man should have commanded the respect of many who treated his arrangements with unsparing severity.

A painful night succeeded that sanguinary day. The moaning of the wounded and the groans of the dying were heard on every side; and it was to be dreaded that Soult, who had still fifteen

thousand troops fit for action, would renew the battle. On the next day three fresh British regiments joined the Marshal by a forced march; and on the 18th Soult retreated on the road of Solano, covered by the heavy cavalry of Latour Maubourg. He had previously despatched such of his wounded as could bear removal towards Seville, leaving the remainder to the generous protection of the British commander.

Badajoz was partially blockaded on the 19th by the Portuguese under General Hamilton. On the second day after, Lord Wellington arrived, and ordered up the third and seventh divisions to complete the investment of that important fortress. Soult continued retreating, and Beresford followed him, by order of the allied commander.

SIEGE OF BADAJOZ, AND AFFAIR OF EL BODON.

Badajoz besieged. — Castle breached and unsuccessfully assaulted. — A second attempt fails. — Siege raised. — French advance. — Badajoz relieved. — Montbrun attacks the allies. —Affair of El Bodon.—Wellington's dangerous situation.— He retreats on the Coa—Offers battle there, which Soult and Marmont decline.—French retire.

It certainly was a bold design, and one that many considered as little removed from rashness, for Lord Wellington to attempt Badajoz a second time, limited as he was in every necessary for a siege, and by no means secure from molestation. He had obtained, by the victories of Fuentes d'Onoro and Albuera, a temporary superiority of force on the Guadiana; but it was not likely that Soult and Marmont would let a fortress to which they attached so much importance fall, without making a vigorous effort for its relief— nor could a rapid reduction of Badajoz be accomplished. The siege trains were wretchedly defective;* the guns, originally bad, had been ruined or disabled during Beresford's recent attempt;

* "Details," &c.

and the engineers reported, that eleven days would be required before they could be remounted and placed in battery; while in twenty, a force quite sufficient to disturb all operations, could easily reach Alemtejo from Salamanca, by the passes of Banos or Gata, and the Tagus was fordable at Alcantara.

Operations commenced on the night of the 30th of May, in front of the castle, by sixteen hundred workmen, covered by a protecting party of twelve hundred. The first parallel, extending one thousand yards, was completed, and no interruption given by the besieged. A lesser party commenced a parallel before San Christoval; but the rocky soil could not be broken without causing alarm, and a severe fire was directed on the workmen, that occasioned a considerable loss.

The approaches were ably pushed on, but great difficulties had to be overcome by the besiegers. Before San Christoval, the stony surface required a supply of earth and workpacks, to form an artificial covering for the engineers and fatigue parties; while the workmen were exposed to the fire of several sixteen and eighteen inch mortars, which threw their enormous shells with a precision that threatened ruin to everything within their range.

When the batteries opened on the morning of the 3rd of June, the imperfect supply of bullets was soon exhausted, and the artillery were obliged

to use the shot intended for guns of an inferior calibre—consequently, the windage was so great, that the service was very indifferent; and several guns, from the defective quality of their metal, were rendered unserviceable by a few discharges.

A siege, where the means of aggression were so imperfect, could only have been carried on by the unremitted exertions of every arm engaged. With various casualties, that of Badajoz continued until the 6th, when two breaches in San Christoval were reported practicable; and it was decided by Lord Wellington that they should be stormed without loss of time.

All was accordingly prepared; the storming party gained the ditch, but the foot of the breach had been cleared, and a sheer ascent of full seven feet of wall unexpectedly presented itself. Without sufficient means for escalade, success was hopeless—and the more prudent plan would have been to retire instantly when the actual state of the breach was ascertained. But British blood was roused; the assailants were bravely led,* and for nearly an hour, in an unavailing effort to surmount an impracticable barrier, the forlorn hope and storming party persevered, until three-fourths of their number were destroyed. Nothing had been omitted by the enemy both for defence and

* Major M'Intosh commanded, Dyas led the forlorn hope, and Forster, of the Engineers, guided the party.

annoyance. The rubbish had been cleared away, and the parapet lined with shells, grenades, stones, and powder-bags, that were rolled into the ditch, and by their repeated explosions, destroyed all within their reach. After desperate but unavailing exertions, the few that remained were withdrawn, — and with some iron guns which had been obtained, the engineers immediately resumed breaching the castle walls.

The fire speedily brought down the ancient masonry, and a bank of clay against which the wall had been erected. An engineer officer examined the breach, and reported that it was practicable, although he received his death-wound in the attempt, and had only strength left to announce that he had done the duty on which he had been employed. But the besieged were indefatigable in repairing by night the damages their works received from the English batteries, and the breach was provided with every means for desperate defence. A more vigorous assault was arranged, and a better hour was selected; the troops were equally ardent and as boldly led, but the result was similar; and the second assault failed with as great a loss of life, and as little chance of succeeding, as marked the former storm.

It was now quite apparent that additional siege artillery must be procured to ensure the fall of Badajoz; information was received by Lord Wel-

lington that Soult and Marmont were making rapid movements to relieve the fortress. To persevere longer would have been madness; — the siege was necessarily raised, and the guns and stores removed without any molestation. A blockade was established; and while the Spaniards were sent across the Guadiana, to operate against the French posts, Lord Wellington took a position in front of Albuera. On the 19th the allies retired on the Caya, and Soult's advanced guard entered Badajoz.

The united force of the French Marshals was greatly superior, particularly in cavalry, to that of Wellington;* but the Caya afforded a strong position, and the British General determined to abide a battle.

A *reconnoissance* by Soult and Marmont, on the 22nd of June, induced a belief that an action would result. Wellington, with admirable tact, kept his masses out of sight, and the Marshals failed in discovering his dispositions. The British bivouacs were in the woods contiguous to the river: — head-quarters at Vicente, Hill's corps at Torre de Moro, on the right, and Picton's division, on the left, at Campo Mayor.

* The French united corps amounted to sixty thousand infantry, and seven thousand six hundred dragoons. The allied force had probably fifty-five thousand infantry, and some four thousand cavalry. As only a portion of the latter arm was British, in quality, as well as numbers, it was much inferior to the French.

On the same morning that the French Marshals had examined the allied position, a strong cavalry force was detached from the enemy's posts, to cross the Guadiana and move towards Elvas. Nothing would have particularly marked this demonstration, had not an English picket of sixty men, with three officers, been cut off and made prisoners, by mistaking the French for Portuguese dragoons. The absurd fancy indulged in at home, of imitating foreign patterns in clothing the cavalry, led to numerous mistakes; while it greatly embarrassed officers, in ascertaining correctly whether troops, when at a trifling distance, were in reality friends or foes.

For a month the French Marshals remained together; their numerous cavalry scouring the face of the country to an immense extent, and wasting it of everything that was convertible into sustenance for either men or horses. At last, these precarious supplies, obtained from an impoverished country, failed altogether; and Soult and Marmont retired from Estramadura, — the latter marching northwards, and the former falling back upon Seville.

On this movement being made, Wellington instantly changed his quarters, first to Portalegre, and afterwards to Fuente Guinaldo. The occupation of the posts and villages contiguous to Ciudad Rodrigo, must, of necessity, cut off from that garrison every chance of a casual supply;

while the distance of the French cantonments (sixty miles), would make it impossible for either of the Marshals to introduce a convoy, unless it were accompanied and protected by an entire *corps d'armée.* Wellington had calculated on these difficulties; his plans were soundly conceived; and they were carried out with that steady resolution, which has always characterized the greatest general that Britain ever claimed.

As had been anticipated, Ciudad Rodrigo became exceedingly straitened; and the French Marshals, at great inconvenience, were obliged to concentrate at Salamanca, to cover the introduction of supplies, which, at every cost, must be thrown into the fortress. Rumour, of course, was busy; one report making them fifty thousand, and another swelling their numbers to eighty. The allied General, however, determined to retain his cantonments; and the position of Guinaldo was strengthened by field-works; while the different divisions were posted so as to admit of speedy concentration. On the right bank of the Agueda, the light division guarded the Sierra de Gata, while Picton held the more advanced position of El Bodon.

The position was too extensive to be strong, and its communications were liable to interruption, as the fords of the Agueda were frequently rendered impassable by sudden rains. The heights of El Bodon and Pastores were on either

side encircled by plains, partially wooded, and reaching from Rodrigo to the Coa. Hence, the position was unsafe; for, if its flanks were turned, the retirement of a corps that held it on Guinaldo, would become a very doubtful matter.

On the 23rd the French moved forward from Tamames, and reconnoitred the British position; and on the next day, pushed a convoy into Badajoz, protected by four divisions of infantry and six thousand cavalry. On the 25th, the English pickets were driven across the Azava—while crossing the Agueda in great force, Montbrun moved directly on Guinaldo, and turned the heights on which Picton's division had been posted. Considerably detached, as from the extent of the position the British regiments necessarily were, their situation became all but desperate. Picton, with the right brigade, was at El Bodon; two regiments at Pastores; while the 5th and 77th British, the 21st Portuguese, two brigades of guns, and three squadrons of German and English cavalry, occupied the height over which the Guinaldo road passes.

Lord Wellington ordered up assistance, on perceiving how dangerously the third division was circumstanced; but before any reached the scene of action, its own and often-tried resource had saved it,—the daring gallantry, that neither an isolated situation nor an overwhelming enemy could disturb.

The advance of the French cavalry was beautiful; the sun shone brilliantly out, and as their numerous squadrons, in long array, approached the heights occupied by the British infantry, nothing could be more imposing than their military attitude. The cool and steady determination with which Colville's brigade waited the enemy's attack was truly British. While the French masses were defiling along the road, the English infantry remained in columns of battalions behind the ridge, and the cavalry stood dismounted, each dragoon with the bridle on his arm, and apparently as careless to coming events, as if he were on the parade-ground of his barrack, waiting for the trumpet call to "fall in." But when the advanced squadrons were about to mount the ridge, the infantry formed line; the dragoons sprang to their saddles; and the artillery, which had occasionally cannonaded the hostile squadrons as they came within their range, opened with additional spirit, and poured from the height a torrent of grape and case shot that occasioned a serious loss to the enemy.

The French appeared to feel sensibly the effect produced by the fire, and a brigade cheered and charged up the heights. The men stood by their guns to the last, but eventually they were obliged to retire. The French dragoons gained the battery, and the cannon were taken.

Their possession by the enemy was but for a

moment. The 5th regiment came steadily forward in line, and after delivering a shattering volley, lowered their bayonets, and boldly advanced to charge the cavalry. This—the first instance of horsemen being assailed by infantry in line—was brilliantly successful. The French were hurried down the height, and the guns re-captured, limbered up, and brought away.

Nor on the other side of the position were the British and German cavalry less gloriously engaged. Again and again the French dragoons charged up the hill, and as regularly were they met sword to sword, repulsed, and beaten back.

But the hill could not be held with such inferior numbers as the British. A column of great strength got unperceived in the rear of the right — not a moment could be lost — and an instant retreat was unavoidable. Indeed, the escape of these devoted regiments seemed hopeless. Montbrun brought forward overwhelming numbers against the left flank, and the French dragoons had cut the right off from its communication with El Bodon. The 83rd united itself with the 5th and 77th, and the Portuguese 21st had already commenced retreating, and gained the plain. The cavalry, finding itself almost surrounded, galloped off at speed—and the British regiments were left alone, to save themselves or perish.

They reached the plain, but Montbrun's nu-

merous squadrons came on with loud huzzas, and in such force, that the annihilation of these weak battalions seemed inevitable. But the French had yet to learn of what stern stuff the British soldier is composed. In a moment the 5th and 77th formed square, and in steady silence awaited the coming onset. The charge was made—the cheering of the dragoons pealed over the battle-field as they came on at speed, and with a fiery determination that nothing could withstand. Against every face of the square a hostile squadron galloped; the earth shook—the cheers rose louder — another moment of that headlong speed must bring the dragoons upon the bayonets of the kneeling front rank. Then from the British square a shattering volley was poured in,—the smoke cleared away,—and, but a few yards from the faces of the square, men and horses were rolling on the plain in death. The charge was repulsed, the ranks disordered; and the French dragoons, recoiling from that fearless array they had vainly striven to penetrate, rode hastily off to reform their broken ranks, and remove themselves from an incessant stream of musketry that had already proved so fatal.*

In the mean time Picton had disengaged the regiments of the right brigade from the enclosures of El Bodon, and joined the 5th and 77th. The whole retreated across the plain in beautiful

* "Details," &c.

order, presenting so bold an attitude, whenever the French made any demonstrations of charging, that they never attempted to close on the squares again. Still Montbrun hung upon the rear and flanks of the allies, maintaining a small cannonade —while his guns were warmly replied to by the English artillery. On getting near Guinaldo, a support of both infantry and cavalry came forward, and the French abandoned the pursuit, after being roughly handled by the fire of the British musketry, and the bold charges of the few squadrons on the field, whose conduct all through that trying day had been most gallant.

The British position was infinitely too extensive for divisions weak as those of Cole and Picton to hold with safety. Lord Wellington had therefore decided on retiring to the Coa, and halt there upon his selected battle-ground; but unfortunately the light division had taken a mountain route instead of fording the Agueda; and General Crawford, ignorant that Gata and Perales were in possession of the French, was marching directly on the enemy. This mistake might have not only occasioned the loss of the light division, but seriously endangered Cole and Picton at Guinaldo. Nor was the alarm lessened on the morning of the 26th, when Marmont got under arms, and exhibited sixty thousand splendid troops,* within little more than cannon-shot of

* "Details," &c.

the two isolated divisions who held the heights above. Fortunately the French Marshal had little suspicion of his rival's weakness, and amused himself with manœuvring his splendid army, instead of overwhelming the allied brigades, which were completely within his reach, alone and unsupported.

On the preceding night, the 60th and 74th, who had been in position at Pastores, and cut off by Montbrun in his attack on El Bodon, forded the Agueda, moved along its right bank, and, after an extraordinary march of fifteen hours, reached the British cantonments in safety. At three in the afternoon, the light division joined; and at night the whole retired towards the position where Wellington had resolved to offer battle.

On the 27th, the French pushed forward a strong corps, and a sharp affair occurred at Aldea de Ponte. The village was twice carried by the French, and as often retaken by Pakenham, with the fusileer brigade and Portuguese Caçadores.

That night Lord Wellington fell back and occupied his selected ground. The Coa was in his rear,—his right extending to the Sierra de Mesas, his centre occupying the village of Soita, and his left resting on the river at Rendo.

This position was too formidable, from its narrow front, to be easily assailed, and the enemy declined an attack. Soon after the French corps

separated, and resumed their former cantonments. Marmont retired on the valley of the Tagus, Dorsenne fell back on Salamanca, Girard moved to Mafra, and Foy proceeded to Placentia. The French operations, on the whole, were a miserable failure. It is true, that Rodrigo was relieved, but in every other essay their designs had failed; and Wellington, with an inferior force, completely checked them.

ARROYO DE MOLINOS, AND SIEGE OF TARIFA.

Girard invades Estremadura. — Hill marches against him.— Surprises him at Arroyo de Molinos.—Spanish affairs.— Fall of Tarragona. — Proceedings of the French siege of Tarifa.—Total defeat of Laval.

General Hill had established his head-quarters at Portalegre, and cantoned his division in the surrounding villages. The position was well chosen; and while it enabled him to observe Badajoz closely, he had the power of concentrating his troops at the shortest notice; while no movement of any consequence could be made by the enemy without the knowledge of the English General.

After retiring from Ciudad Rodrigo, Soult had turned his attention against the newly-raised army of Castanos; and Girard, with a moveable column, was despatched into Estremadura, to narrow his line of action and cripple his supplies.

Girard's presence was most injurious, and threatened the very existence of an army whose means of sustenance must be drawn from the country alone. Throughout the Peninsular war, the Spanish commissariate was but a name.

Castanos' support, therefore, depended on his own exertions; and it was absolutely necessary that the French should be driven from that portion of Estremadura, or the Spanish general could not subsist his raw and ill-appointed levies.

That task was consigned to Hill, assisted by some Spanish troops, under the command of Giron and Penne Villemur. Apprised of the advance of the allies, Girard fell back from Aliseda; and, after a cavalry affair with Villemur, he retired, first to Arroyo Puerco, and then, passing Caceres, marched on Tollemacha. Hill, on gaining correct intelligence of his route, proceeded by the shorter road of Aldea de Cano and Casa Antonio; while Girard, leaving a rear-guard at Albola, fell back, the morning of the 27th, on Arroyo de Molinos.

This little town stands at the base of a steep and rugged mountain, one of the extreme ridges of the Sierra de Montanches. The height that overlooks it is nearly inaccessible, forming a crescent behind the town, whose points are about two miles apart. Beneath the eastern point, the Truxillo road is carried; while that of Merida runs at right angles with that of Alcuescar — and the Medellin road between the former two. A plain stretches between Arroyo and Alcuescar, interspersed with a few patches of oaks and cork-trees. To occupy these several roads, and thus cut off Girard's retreat, was Hill's

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great object. By a forced march he reached Alcuescar in the evening, lay under arms for the night, moved at two in the morning, and, undiscovered, halted within half a mile of the French corps, who were leisurely preparing to resume their march, and little dreamed of his dangerous proximity. The bad roads, however, delayed Hill's advance; and it was past six o'clock before the columns of attack were formed.

The first brigade, under Lieutenant-colonel Stewart, was ordered to attack the town. The second, under Howard, moved rapidly to the right of Arroyo, and occupied the Medellin road. Between these columns the cavalry of Villemur was posted, to charge, if necessary, or support either corps that might require it.

The weather, though distressing to the troops, was favourable for a surprise. It rained heavily, and a storm of wind was raging. No enemy interrupted the allied advance—for their outlying picket had returned to the town, as Girard had ordered his division to march at daybreak.

When the attack was being made, the first French brigade were filing from the streets of Arroyo by the Merida road, under a perfect assurance that their march would be unmolested; when suddenly a dragoon galloped in, announcing that a body of men were marching rapidly towards the town, but the mist was too thick to permit their uniform to be seen.

Girard was convinced that these troops were Spanish, and jocosely remarked, that "Messieurs les Anglois lay too long a-bed, to be stirring such a morning." But a few minutes undeceived him, —a loud cheer was heard, and instantly the Highland regiments appeared, their bagpipes playing "Hey, Johnny Cope, are ye waking yet?" They entered with unloaded muskets—the bayonet was to do all—no prisoners were to be secured —they were directed to press on—bear down all resistance—and push directly for the point of the mountain.

The French corps that had already commenced its march, formed in squares of regiments outside the town, between the roads of Medellin and Merida, with the cavalry on the left — and Stewart's brigade pressed forward through the streets, leaving to a wing of the 50th, the task of securing such of the enemy, as this sudden attack prevented from escaping with the columns. Finding the French in square, the 71st lined the fences, while the 92nd formed and opened its fire. The cavalry (Spanish), joined by a few English hussars, charged and routed the horsemen of Girard, just as Wilson's Portuguese brigade broke through the mist, and appeared on the left and rear of this devoted band. The French cavalry instantly galloped off; and the infantry threw down their arms, and endeavoured to escape by the mountain. The paths over the Sierra, difficult at all times, were now a wretched

route to retreat by,—the advanced British regiment was already mixed with the rear of the fugitives—and a scrambling pursuit succeeded. In a regular route resistance is seldom offered; and a number of prisoners, the arms, baggage—in short, the whole *matèriel* of Girard's division, were taken by the victors with trifling loss.

After this successful expedition, Hill retired again to Portalegre; the troops took up their old cantonments—and for a time active operations terminated.

The success of the British arms had a very powerful effect in rousing the spirits of the Spaniards, whose armies had hitherto been so frequently and signally defeated. The irregular bands of guerilla leaders everywhere increased, and their activity and enterprise crippled the resources of the French, and caused them much alarm and embarrassment. Although generally unfortunate in the field, in desultory warfare the Spanish partisans were formidable; and in the south, it required incessant vigilance on the part of the invaders, to secure their detached posts, and move their convoys through the country.

One of those fortunate affairs—few and far between—that shed a passing gleam of glory upon the Spanish arms, occurred at Vals, between Eugene and Sarsfield. The French were completely beaten, and Eugene himself killed.

Other operations of no great moment were attended with varied success. Suchet had suc-

ceeded Macdonald ; and by his activity the province of Catalonia was overrun, the Spanish strongholds gradually wrested from their possession, and Tarragona regularly besieged.

From the strength of the place, and the number of the garrison, the city was obstinately held against the French. But one after the other, its defences were carried by storm—and as no quarter was given, scenes, too horrible for conception, were enacted. The men were savagely butchered, — the women exposed to the most dreadful indignities, — and in the annals of war, among many instances of frightful excesses perpetrated by an infuriated soldiery, those occurring at the storm of Tarragona* will be found the worst.

In the south of Spain, Ballasteros had been successful in some affairs with the French detachments ; and the people of Ronda, a mountain district of great strength, were up in arms. In consequence, Godinot was despatched by Soult with a division against Ballasteros, who was eventually driven to the extremity of the Peninsula, and obliged to obtain protection under the guns of Gibraltar.

A corps of British and Spanish troops had, in this interim, been landed from Cadiz, and took possession of Tarifa, and Godinot put his division in motion to attack them. His line of march was by the coast, and some British vessels having been apprised that he was advancing, had

* "Details," &c.

anchored close to the pass of La Pena. On attempting to get forward, the ships opened their batteries, and swept the road with such excellent effect, that Godinot abandoned the route, and hastily retreated.

Soult, however, had determined that Tarifa should be reduced; and Laval, with considerable reinforcements, was directed to invest it without delay. Tarifa was a place of little strength; an old slight wall, connecting a number of towers, forming its whole protection. The town is traversed by a mountain river, whose entrance is secured by a tower and portcullis, while the bed of the stream was strongly pallisaded. The outlet was defended by an old castle and tower called the Guzmans. Tarifa joins a promontory of small extent, by a sandy spot of land and a causeway; and on the highest sandhill, called Catalina, a field-work, armed with a twelve-pounder, had been hastily thrown up. The presence of a British line-of-battle ship and frigate in the bay secured the island, and prevented any operations from being attempted within the range of their powerful batteries.

On the 20th, the place was invested by Laval. The siege commenced with an evil omen; for on the next morning a French picket, having incautiously advanced, was suddenly cut off by a party of the 11th regiment and made prisoners.

A daring sally was made next day. Some of

the English garrison penetrated the French camp and seized a gun; of course they were unable to carry it away, but they managed to draw the enemy under the fire of the ships and tower, by which they suffered considerably.

On the 22nd Laval broke ground, and pushed forward his approaches by the eastern front until the 26th. On the 29th, the French having received their siege artillery, the guns opened on the wall, while their howitzers shelled the island. A very few discharges shook the old and feeble masonry — and in a few hours it came down in such masses, as formed an enormous breach, and left the place equally open to assault or escalade.

The street of Tarifa immediately behind the breach was fourteen feet beneath its level. Every preparation was made to receive the assault, the houses that commanded the breach being fortified and garrisoned, the street effectually barricaded, and the troops carefully distributed; the 47th and Spaniards were directed to defend the breach—the 87th the portcullis, tower, and rampart; while a rifle company connected the regiments with each other.

Although for sixty feet the breach was open, and offered an easy ascent, the French did not venture to storm. At night, salvos of grape were fired by the French batteries, but in the intervals between the discharges, the garrison cleared the foot of the breach, and enlarged their means of defence behind it.

On the night or the 30th, a tremendous rain increased the river to such a height, that the torrent, sweeping all before it, broke down the pallisades and injured the portcullis. But this calamity did not daunt the British; they laboured vigorously all night, and by morning the defences were restored.

The mountain flood subsided quickly, and at daylight a battalion of French grenadiers quietly approached by the river bed, and rushed forward to break down the stockade. Not a shot had been fired by the British, who waited their approach with perfect coolness; but when they touched the portcullis, a rolling volley was delivered with such terrible effect, that the head of the column was annihilated, and all that composed it perished, from the officer that led, to the poor drum-boy who beat the *pas de charge*. The river bed was choked with corpses—that approach was effectually barricaded by the dead,—while rushing up the banks, the French grenadiers opened their musketry, assisted by a fire from the trenches, and a number of pits in front of their lines, which had been dug by Laval to afford a cover for his sharpshooters. But the column had been too much shattered by the first discharge to recover its courage—a sustained fire of British musketry, closely and efficiently kept up, cut off the boldest of the French soldiers who still made anything like an effort at advancing—while a six-pounder on

the town wall, enfiladed the assailants, at scarcely pistol distance, and kept up an unceasing torrent of grape, that tore up the masses of the enemy, and drove them once more for shelter to the hollow. It was hopeless to continue longer under this murderous fire.—The French retired at speed to their trenches, leaving the bed and banks of the stream heaped with corpses; while the cheering of the garrison, and the band of the 87th, as it struck up a national quickstep, strangely contrasted with the groans of dying men, and the still more harrowing outcries of the wounded.

Every kindness was bestowed upon these sufferers by their generous enemy. Those who could be carried off the field were brought through the breach and dressed by English surgeons, or allowed to be removed to their own camp. The weather became horrible—rain fell in torrents—the besiegers and besieged were equally inconvenienced—and on the night of the 4th, Laval having destroyed part of his artillery and buried the remainder, retreated, and abandoned the siege. During the time the French remained before Tarifa, their loss exceeded a thousand men, while the British casualties did not reach much above one hundred.*

The Spanish armies continued their operations, and generally with indifferent success. Blake

* The duration of the siege was seventeen days, and for seven the breach had been perfectly open.

and the army of Murcia were totally defeated by Soult at Lorca. The Spanish General afterwards assumed the command of the troops in Valentia—and Suchet entered that province in considerable force.

At Murviedro, the French Marshal, attempting by a *coup de main* to carry the place, was repulsed with considerable loss; but, having brought up his siege artillery, he reduced the castle of Oropesa, and renewed his efforts with additional means and increased vigour. His first assault failed; and Blake advancing to raise the siege, Suchet determined to offer battle, and on the 24th the French and Spaniards made their dispositions, and formed in each other's front. Early on the 25th, the latter advanced, and attacked their enemy. For a time the Spanish wings drove back the French, gained ground on either flank, and carried an important height; but, unfortunately, they had endangered their centre by a too great extension of their line; and Suchet, bringing up his reserve, strengthened his left wing, and burst upon Blake's weak point with a fury not to be resisted. The Spaniards were broken, their left wing cut to pieces in detail; while the right, by a gallant effort, retreated in good order by the Valencia road. The Spanish loss was estimated at seven thousand *hors de combat;* and Murviedro surrendered on the following day.

Blake, after his defeat, took a strong position

under the walls of Valencia, threw up field-works, destroyed some bridges, and fortified the others; while Suchet established himself on the left bank of the Guadalavia, and waited for the reinforcements for which he had applied. On Christmas-day a strong corps arrived from Catalonia, and strengthened the French army by ten thousand men; and on the next morning Suchet crossed the river, drove the Spanish left from their intrenchments, and obliged Blake, with the remainder of his army, to shut himself up in Valencia.

Overburthened by a population and troops amounting to one hundred thousand souls, the city could not hold out long. Blake unsuccessfully endeavoured to force Suchet's line, but was again driven into the town. A bombardment ensued; and, on the 8th of January, a capitulation took place; the Spanish army became prisoners of war, and Valencia opened its gates to the conqueror.

SIEGE OF CIUDAD RODRIGO.

Lord Wellington makes secret preparations to besiege Ciudad Rodrigo.—Siege commences.—City carried by assault—and given up to plunder.

A CAMPAIGN highly honourable to the British arms had ended, and the rival armies had taken up cantonments for the winter months, each covering an extensive range of country, for the better obtaining of forage and supplies. Active operations for a season were suspended—and officers, whose private concerns or bad health required a temporary leave of absence, had asked and received permission to revisit England. The restoration of the works of Almeida, which the French had half destroyed, occupied the leisure time of the British and Portuguese artificers—while for the ostensible purpose of arming that fortress, siege stores and a battering train were conveyed thither by water carriage, the Douro having been rendered navigable by the English engineers for an extended distance of forty miles.

But the arming of Almeida was but a feint—the reduction of Ciudad Rodrigo was the real object of Lord Wellington, and with indefatigable

zeal he applied himself to obtain the means. A waggon train was organized—six hundred carts, on an improved construction, were built; and while the French Marshal, supposing that the weakness of Lord Wellington was a security against any act of aggression upon his part, detached Montbrun to Valencia, and Dorsenne to the Asturias and Montana, the English General was quietly preparing to strike a sudden and unexpected blow, and completed his necessary arrangements for investing Rodrigo the 6th of January.

Considering the season of the year, and the nakedness of the country for many miles around the threatened fortress, the intended operation was bold to a degree. The horses had scarcely any forage, and the men were literally destitute of bread or shelter. The new year came in inclemently—rain fell in torrents—and though the investment was delayed two days, the brigade (Mackinnon's) that marched from Aldea de Ponte, left nearly four hundred men behind, in a route of only four-and-twenty miles, numbers of whom perished on the line of march, or died subsequently of fatigue.

Ciudad Rodrigo stands on high ground, in the centre of an extensive plain, over which it domineers. The city is erected on the right bank of the Agueda, which there branches into numerous channels, and forms a number of small islands.

The citadel commands the town, and standing on an elevated mound is difficult of access on every side. Since their late occupation, the French had added considerably to the strength of the place. The suburbs were secured against a *coup de main*, by fortifying two convents on their flanks, and another nearly in the centre. On the north side the ground rises in two places; that furthest from the works is thirteen feet above the level of the ramparts, from which it is distant six hundred yards. The other, of lesser altitude, is scarcely two hundred paces. On the former the enemy had erected a redoubt; it was protected by a fortified convent called San Francisco, as well as the artillery of the place, which commanded the approaches from the hill.

The Agueda is fordable in several places, the best passage being within pistol-shot of the walls. In winter, from the sudden floodings of the river, these fords cannot be relied upon—and a bridge of eighteen trestles, with a platform four hundred feet long, was secretly constructed in the citadel of Almeida and conveyed to Salices.

Four divisions were intrusted with the duties of the siege. They took their turns in course—each for twenty-four hours furnishing the requisite guards and working parties.

On the night the investment was regularly commenced, and the redoubt on the upper Teson stormed by three companies of the 52nd with

trifling loss. Ground was broken on its flank, and by the morning the trench was four feet wide and three in depth. On the following night the first parallel was opened; and the outlines of three batteries, for eleven guns each, were traced.

The weather continued dreadfully inclement; and as it was believed that Marmont would endeavour to raise the siege, Wellington decided on rapid operations, and resolved to attempt a storm, even with the counterscarps entire. Both the besiegers and the besieged were active in their operations. On the night of the 13th, the convent of Santa Cruz was taken; and on the 14th, while the division was coming to relieve the working parties, the garrison made a sortie, overturned the gabions in advance of the parallel, and would have succeeded in spiking the guns, but for the spirited opposition of a few workmen and engineers, who checked the attempt, until the head of the division closing up obliged the French to retire.

On the morning of the 14th the batteries were nearly ready for breaching, mounted with twenty-three 24-pounders and two eighteens. At four o'clock in the afternoon their fire commenced,—and a spectacle more strikingly magnificent, it has rarely been the good fortune even of a British soldier to witness.

"The evening chanced to be remarkably beau-

tiful and still; there was not a cloud in the sky, nor a breath of wind astir, when suddenly the roar of artillery broke in upon its calmness, and volumes of smoke rose slowly from the batteries. These floating gently towards the town, soon enveloped the lower part of the hill, and even the ramparts and bastions, in a dense veil; while the towers and summits, lifting their heads over the haze, showed like fairy buildings, or those unsubstantial castles which are sometimes seen in the clouds on a summer's day. The flashes from the British guns, answered as they were from the artillery in the front, and the roar of their thunder reverberating among the remote mountains of the Sierra de Francisca; these, with the rattle of the balls against the walls, proved altogether a scene which, to be rightly understood, must be experienced."*

That night the convent of San Francisco was escaladed by a wing of the 40th,—and the French having abandoned the suburbs, they were occupied by the besiegers.

At daybreak on the 15th the batteries resumed their fire, and at sunset the walls of the main scarp and fausse braye† were visibly shaken.‡ Under cover of a fog on the 16th, the second

* Lord Londonderry. † "Details," &c.

‡ The beautiful artillery practice at this siege was attributed to the accidental circumstance of the shot brought from Almeida to the batteries being of a larger size than that

parallel was prolonged; but the front of the works was so limited, and the fire of the enemy so concentrated and correct, that it required immense time to throw up a battery. The difficulty may be readily imagined, from the fact of the French having discharged, at the approaches, upwards of twenty thousand shot and shells. Another battery of seven guns was opened on the 18th. On the 19th, two breaches were distinctly visible from the trenches, and on being carefully reconnoitred, they were declared practicable. Lord Wellington examined them in person, — decided on storming them that evening, — and from behind the reverse of one of the approaches issued written orders for the assault.

The larger breach, exposing a shattered front of more than one hundred feet, had been carefully mined. The base of the wall strewn with shells and grenades, and the top, where troops might escalade, similarly defended. Behind, a deep retrenchment was cut to insulate the broken rampart, in the event of its being carried by storm. The lesser breach was narrow at the top, exceedingly steep, with a four-and-twenty-pounder turned sideways, that blocked the pas-

which is commonly employed; consequently the windage was diminished, and the firing became so singularly correct, that every shot struck the wall with a precision which ordinary bullets, discharged from the same gun, and with equal care, could never effect.

sage up, except an opening between the muzzle and the wall, by which two files might enter.

Early in the evening, the third and light divisions were moved from their cantonments. At six, the third moved to the rear of the first parallel, two gun-shots from the main breach, — while the light formed behind a convent, three hundred yards in front of the smaller one. Darkness came on,—and with it came the order to "Stand to arms." With calm determination, the soldiers of the third division heard their commanding officer announce the main breach as the object of attack; and every man prepared himself promptly for the desperate struggle. Off went the packs, — the stocks were unbuckled, — the cartouch-box arranged to meet the hand more readily, — flints were screwed home,— every one, after his individual fancy, fitting himself for action. The companies were carefully told off—the sergeants called the rolls,—and not a man was missing!

The town clock struck seven,—and its sonorous bell knelled the fate of hundreds. Presently the forlorn hope formed under the leading of the senior subaltern of the 88th, William Mackie: Picton and Mackinnon rode up and joined the division. The former's address to the Connaught Rangers was brief, it was to "Spare powder, and trust entirely to cold iron." The word was given,

— "Forward!" was repeated in under tones, — the forlorn hope led the way, — the storming party, carrying bags filled with dry grass, followed, — the division in column succeeded, — all moved on in desperate silence, and of the third division not a file hung back.

The 5th regiment joined from the right, and all pressed forward to the breach. The bags, thrown into the ditch by the sappers, reduced the depth one half; ladders were instantly raised, the storming party mounted, and after a short but severe struggle, the breach was won.

Before the storming party had entered the ditch, the shells and combustibles had been prematurely exploded, occasioning but trifling loss to the assailants. The French instantly abandoned the breach, sprang the mines, and fell back behind the retrenchment, from which, and from the neighbouring houses, they maintained a murderous fire.

In the mean time the light division had stormed the lesser breach. It was most gallantly carried; and the loss would not have been severe but for the accidental explosion of a service magazine behind the traverse, by which several officers and a number of men were destroyed. Directed by the heavy fire at the main breach, part of the 43rd and 95th rushed along the ramparts to assist their comrades of the third division; and Pack's brigade, having converted their feint upon the

southern face of the works into a real attack, and entering the "fausse braye," drove the French before them with the bayonet. Thus threatened in their rear, the enemy abandoned the retrenchment; and, still resisting, were driven from street to street, until they flung down their arms, and asked and received that quarter which the laws of war denied, and the fury of an excited soldiery left them but little hope of obtaining.

The town was won; but, alas! many of the best and bravest had fallen. Crawford* was mortally wounded in leading the light division to the lesser breach; and Mackinnon† blown up, after having gained the ramparts of the great one. During the siege, the allies lost three officers and seventy-seven killed; twenty-four officers and five hundred men wounded; while in the storm, six officers and one hundred and forty men fell, and sixty officers and nearly five hundred men were wounded. The French loss was severe; and the commandant, General Barrier, with eighty officers and seventeen hundred men were taken prisoners. There were found upon the works one hundred and nine pieces of artillery, a battering train of forty-four guns, and an armoury and arsenal filled with military stores.

Thus fell Rodrigo. On the evening of the 8th the first ground was broken,—on that of the

* "Details," &c. † "Details," &c.

19th the British colours were flying on the ramparts. Massena, after a tedious bombardment, took a full month to reduce it; Wellington carried it by assault in eleven days. No wonder that Marmont, in his despatch to Berthier, was puzzled to account for the rapid reduction of a place, respecting whose present safety and ultimate relief, he had previously forwarded the most encouraging assurances.*

After all resistance had ceased, the usual scene of riot, plunder, and confusion, which by prescriptive right the stormers of a town enjoy, occurred. Every house was entered and despoiled; the spirit stores were forced open; the soldiery got desperately excited; and in the madness of their intoxication, committed many acts of silly and wanton violence. All plundered what they could, and in turn they were robbed by their own companions. Brawls and bloodshed resulted — and the same men who, shoulder to shoulder, had won their way over the "imminent deadly breach," fought with demoniac ferocity for some disputed article of plunder. At last, worn out by fatigue, and stupified with brandy, they sank into brutal insensibility; and on the second day, with few exceptions, rejoined their regiments; the assault and sacking of Rodrigo appearing in their confused imaginations rather like some troubled dream than a desperate and blood-stained reality.

* "Details," &c.

Anecdotes of individual adventure best depict the scene of wild excitement a captured city presents. Several are appended in the *Details*—and one, by the heroic leader of the forlorn hope, conveys a graphic representation of the storming of the greater breach, and the surrender of the citadel.

On the second day, order was tolerably restored; stragglers had returned to their regiments; the breaches were repaired, the trenches filled in, and the place being once more perfectly defensible, was given up by Lord Wellington to Castanos, the captain-general of the province, who had been present at the siege. Additional honours were deservedly conferred upon the conqueror of Rodrigo. Wellington was created an English Earl and a Spanish Duke—and a farther annuity of 2,000*l.* a year was voted by a grateful country, to support the dignities he had so deservedly conferred.

But another and a bolder blow was yet to be struck. Again the troops were put in motion, and the order was obeyed with pleasure, all being too happy to quit a place where every supply had been exhausted, and every object recalled the loss of relatives and friends.* Leaving a division of infantry on the Agueda, the remainder of the army moved rapidly back upon the Tagus, and, crossing the river, head-quarters were established

* "Details," &c.

at Elvas, on the 11th. There every preparation was completed for one of the boldest of Lord Wellington's attempts,—on the 16th, a pontoon bridge across the Guadiana was traversed by the light, third, and fourth divisions, and Badajoz regularly invested.

SIEGE OF BADAJOZ.

Siege of Badajoz.—The Castle assaulted, and carried by escalade. — Philippon surrenders. — Town given up to the soldiery, and sacked.

THE secrecy and despatch with which Lord Wellington had formed or collected all necessary *matériel* for besieging the formidable place on whose reduction he had determined, was astonishing. The heavy guns had been brought by sea from Lisbon, transhipped into craft of easy draught of water, and thus conveyed up the river until they reached the banks of the Guadiana. Gabions and fascines* were prepared in the surrounding woods — intrenching tools provided — the pontoon bridge brought up from Abrantez — and the battering train, comprising sixteen 24 and twenty 18-pounders, with sixteen 24-pound howitzers, were forwarded from Almeida, and parked upon the glacis of Elvas, in readiness for the opening of the siege.

Though not entirely aware of the extent of

* *Fascines* are small branches of trees bound together thus. They are used for filling ditches, masking batteries, &c. &c.

these hostile preparations, Philippon, the governor of Badajoz, had apprised Marshal Soult that the fortress was threatened, and demanded a supply of shells and gunpowder. This requisition, though immediately complied with, was not obtained — for Sir Rowland Hill, with his characteristic activity, prevented the convoy from reaching its destination. Indeed nothing which could secure the place had been forgotten or neglected by its governor. The Forts of San Christoval and Pardelaras had been considerably strengthened and enlarged,—the former by a lunette,* magazine and bomb-proof, and the latter by a general repair. Badajoz was provisioned for five weeks,—the garrison was numerous and well-appointed, — and, confident in his own resources and skill, Philippon, after two successful defences, resolutely prepared himself for a third, and with a perfect conviction that, like the others, it, too, would prove successful.

The force that invested the fortress on the 16th, was placed under the command of Marshal Beresford, and consisted of the divisions of Barnard, Picton, and Colville. The first, sixth, and seventh divisions, with the cavalry of La Marchant and Slade, were placed in advance, at Larena, Mafra, and Los Santos, to observe the

* A work on either side of a ravelin, with one perpendicular face. They are also sometimes thrown up beyond the second ditch, opposite the places of arms.

movements of Soult; while the second British division, and the Portuguese under General Hamilton, with a cavalry brigade attached, occupied Merida and Almendralajo, to prevent a junction between Soult and Marmont, should the latter attempt to unite his forces with those of the Duke of Dalmatia.

Badajoz is easily described. Round one portion of the town, the rivulets, Calamon and Rivellas sweep, and unite with the Guadiana, which flows in the face of the works, and in front of the heights of San Christoval. The castle stands above the union of these rivers. The fortifications are exceedingly strong — the bastions and curtains regular—while formidable outworks, the forts of Pardelaras, Picarina, and San Christoval, complete the exterior defences.

A close *reconnoissance* at once convinced Lord Wellington that the defences had been amazingly improved—and, as time pressed, and the means of regular investment were but indifferent, he determined that the bastion of La Trinidad, from its unfinished counterguard,* should be battered. To effect this, the Picarina redoubt, forming nearly an angle with the bastion, and the lunette of San Rocque, must necessarily be carried.

The night of the 16th was bad enough to mask

* *Counterguards* are small ramparts, with parapets and ditches, erected in front of a bastion or ravelin, to secure the opposite flanks from being open to the covert-way.

any daring essay—and rain, darkness, and storm, favoured the bold attempt. Ground was accordingly broken—and though but one hundred and seventy yards from the covered-way, the working parties were neither heard nor molested. The 17th and 18th were similarly employed—but under a heavy fire from the Picarina fort, and such of the guns upon the works as could be turned by the garrison on the approaches.

The evening of the 18th, however, produced a very different scene, and the enemy became assailant. A *sortie* was made with fifteen hundred men, accompanied by some forty cavalry. To the works, this sudden assault occasioned but little mischief. The gabions* were overturned, some intrenching tools captured, and great confusion caused among the working parties; but the French were speedily driven back, after causing much alarm, and a loss of one hundred and fifty in killed and wounded. Colonel Fletcher, the chief of the engineers, was unfortunately among the latter.

The weather was in every way unfavourable for prosecuting the siege, and elemental influences seemed to have united with Philippon against the allied commander. The rain fell in torrents—the

* *Gabions* are large circular baskets, filled with earth or sand, and used for forming parapets, covering working parties, &c. &c.

river rose far beyond its customary height,—the pontoons swamped at their moorings—and all were swept away. From the violence of the current, the flying bridges worked but slowly, and serious apprehensions were entertained lest the communications should be interrupted with the other side, and, of necessity, that the siege must be raised. To forward the works required incredible fatigue; the ground was soaked with moisture; the trenches more than knee-deep with mud and rain; the revêtements* of the batteries crumbled away under any pressure, and it was almost impossible to lay platforms for the guns. Indeed, had the works been ready for their reception, the task of transporting heavy artillery across a surface, rendered a perfect swamp by the incessant torrents which had fallen for days without any intermission, would have been a most laborious duty. Fortunately, the weather changed, the ground dried partially, and the works were carried on with additional spirit. By employing teams of oxen, assisted by numerous fatigue parties, the guns were brought forward, and the batteries armed—and on the 25th they opened on the Picarina, and the place itself, with excellent effect, while Philippon returned the fire from

* *Revêtement* of a battery, is the exterior front, formed of masonry or fascines, which keeps the bank of the work from falling.

every gun upon the ramparts that could be brought to bear.

Perceiving the true object of the besiegers, and certain that the Picarina would be assailed, ample measures were taken for its defence. The ditch was deepened, the gorge secured by an additional palisade; under the angles of the glacis fougasses* were placed, and shells and grenades laid along the parapet, to roll down upon the storming party at the moment of attack. The ditch was exposed to a flanking fire, and two hundred spare muskets were ranged along the banquet. Every means, in short, were adopted that could ensure a vigorous and successful resistance.

That night, at ten o'clock, the fort was attacked and carried by five hundred men of the third division, under Major-general Kempt. One party was directed to attempt the gorge, another prevented the place from being succoured from the city, and at the same time cut off the garrison

* The reader, who is not acquainted with terms used by engineers, may find a brief explanation of those of frequent recurrence serviceable.

The glacis, is the part beyond the covert-way to which it forms the parapet.

The flank, is any part of a work which defends another.

The epaule, is the shoulder of the bastion.

The gorge, is next the body of the place where there is no rampart.

Fougasse, is a small mine, six or seven feet under ground, generally formed in the glacis or dry ditch.

Curtain, the wall that connects bastions.

from retreat; and a third were to distract the attention of the French, and assist their comrades by making a front attack.

The first detachment reached the gorge undiscovered, but failed in forcing the palisades, from the heavy fire of musketry poured on them by the garrison. Retiring from a place where success was hopeless, the storming party moved round the left flank, and escaladed and won the parapet; while another forced the salient angle simultaneously. The French retreated to a guard-house, which they barricaded and defended most obstinately. Alarmed by a false report that a large body of the besieged had sallied from the town to relieve the fort, the troops were about to abandon these advantages, and quit a place their bravery had already won; but General Kempt dispelled the panic, led them forward, and attacked the garrison again, who fought to the very last; and, with the exception of some seventy, perished while desperately resisting. The taking of Picarina was gallantly effected, but it cost the British dear — the casualties, in killed and wounded, being nineteen officers and upwards of three hundred men.

The capture of the fort enabled the second parallel to be pushed on, and breaching batteries to be completed. The guns maintained a heavy fire on the bastion of La Trinidad; and the sappers directed their efforts against the lunette of San

Rocque. The progress of the siege was slow; and though two breaches were made, the certainty that both were retrenched* and secured by interior defences, rendered an assault too hazardous an experiment to be ventured. Lord Wellington was critically circumstanced; Marmont had made some forward movements in front of Beira, and Soult was advancing, determined to relieve the place. His light troops were already at Larena; the covering army under Hill had been obliged to retreat; and after blowing up two arches of the bridge of Merida, had taken post in front of Talavera. In consequence, the fifth division was ordered to advance, leaving the observation of San Christoval to the Portuguese cavalry; the British general having decided on leaving a corps of ten thousand men to protect the trenches, and with the remainder of his force bring Soult to action.

At noon, on the 5th, the breaches were reconnoitred and declared practicable; but the assault was deferred for another day to allow the artillery time to batter down the curtain, connecting the bastion with an unfinished ravelin. The concentrated fire of the British batteries fell upon the old wall with irresistible force; it was breached in

* *Retrench*, in fortification, means the isolating of a breach by forming inner defences; as cutting a trench, palisading, erecting barricades, &c.

a single day, and thus three points for assault were thrown open. The report of the engineers was encouraging; the main breach was sufficiently wide, and the ascent to all three easy enough for troops to mount.

Ten o'clock on the night of the 6th was appointed for the assault to be attempted, and the necessary orders were issued accordingly. The castle was to be attacked by the third division—the bastion of La Trinidad by the fourth—that of Santa Maria by the light division—the lunette of San Rocque by a party from the trenches; while the fifth should distract the garrison by a false attack on the Pardelaras, and the works contiguous to San Vicente.

Philippon, well aware that an assault might be expected, had employed every resource that skill and ingenuity could devise, to render the attempt a failure. As Lord Wellington had neither time nor means to destroy the counterscarps, the French were enabled to raise the most formidable obstructions at their foot, and insulate the breaches effectually. At night, the rubbish was removed, retrenchments formed, the battered parapets repaired by sand-bags, casks, and woolpacks. Powder-barrels and grenades were laid along the trenches—and at the foot of the breach sixty fourteen-inch shells, communicating with hoses and bedded in earth, were

placed ready for explosion. A chevaux-de-frieze* was stretched across the rampart, and planks studded with spikes covered the slopes of the breaches. Every species of combustible was employed, and a cartridge specially prepared for the musketry, formed of buck-shot and slugs; when the distance was so close, nothing would prove more mischievous.

The day was remarkably fine—and the troops, in high spirits, heard the orders for the assault, and proceeded to clean their appointments, as if a dress parade only was intended. Evening came,—darkness shut distant objects out,—the regiments formed,—the roll was called in an under voice,—the forlorn hope stepped out,—the storming party was told off,—all were in readiness, and "eager for the fray."

Shortly before ten, a beautiful firework rose from the town, and showed the outline of Badajoz and every object that lay within several hundred yards of the works. The flame of the carcase died gradually away—and darkness, apparently more dense, succeeded this short and brilliant illumination.

* *Chevaux-de-frieze* are wooden spars, spiked at one end, and set into a piece of timber thus. They were originally used as a defence against cavalry, but are now commonly employed in strengthening outworks, stopping breaches, &c.

The word was given, the forlorn hope moved forward, the storming parties succeeded, and the divisions, in columns, closed the whole. Of these splendid troops, now all life and daring, how many were living in an hour?

At that moment the deep bell of the cathedral of St. John struck ten; the most perfect silence reigned around, and except the softened footsteps of the storming parties, as they fell upon the turf with military precision, not a movement was audible. A terrible suspense, — a horrible stillness, — darkness, — a compression of the breathing,—the dull and ill-defined outline of the town, — the knowledge that similar and simultaneous movements were making on other points, — the certainty that two or three minutes would probably involve the forlorn hope in ruin, or make it the beacon-light to conquest, — all these made the heart throb quicker, and long for the bursting of the storm, when victory should crown daring with success, or hope and life should end together.

On went the storming parties; and one solitary musket was discharged beside the breach, but none answered it. The light division moved forward, rapidly closing up in columns at quarter distance. The ditch was gained, — the ladders were lowered,— on rushed the forlorn hope, with the storming party close behind them. The divisions were now on the brink of the sheer

descent, when a gun boomed from the parapet. The earth trembled,— a mine was fired,— an explosion,— and an infernal hissing from lighted fusees succeeded,—and, like the rising of a curtain on the stage, in the hellish glare that suddenly burst out around the breaches, the French lining the ramparts in crowds, and the English descending the ditch, were placed as distinctly visible to each other as if the hour were noontide!

A tremendous fire from the guns, a number of which had been laid upon the approaches to the breach, followed the explosion; but, undaunted, the storming party cheered, and undauntedly the French answered it. A murderous scene ensued, for the bréach was utterly impassable. Notwithstanding the withering fire of musketry from the parapets, with light artillery directed immediately on the breach, and grape from every gun upon the works that could play upon the assailants and the supporting columns, the British mounted. Hundreds were thrown back, and hundreds as promptly succeeded them. Almost unharmed themselves, the French dealt death around; and secure within defences, that even in daylight and to a force unopposed, proved afterwards nearly insurmountable, they ridiculed the mad attempt; and while they viewed from the parapets a thousand victims writhing in the ditch, called in derision to the broken columns, and invited them to come on.

While the assaults upon the breaches were thus fatally unsuccessful, the third and fifth divisions had moved to their respective points of attack. Picton's, to whom the citadel was assigned, found difficulties nearly equal to those encountered at the breaches. Thither Philippon had determined to retire, if the assault upon the other defences should succeed, and, in that event, hold the castle and San Christoval to the last. To render the place more secure, he had caused the gates to be built up, and the ramparts were lined with shells, cart-wheels, stones, and every destructive missile. Fireballs betrayed the movements of the assailants; and, for a time, every attempt at escalade failed with prodigious loss. At last one ladder was planted; — a few daring spirits gained the ramparts, — crowds followed them, — and in an incredibly short time the castle was won. Philippon heard of the disaster too late to redeem its loss. The troops despatched from the breaches and elsewhere were unable to recover it, — a British jacket waved from the flag-staff, and in the first dawn of morning announced the downfall of Badajoz.

The fifth division were equally successful; though General Leith had to delay his attack till eleven o'clock, from the party who had charge of the ladders losing their way.

The attempt on San Vicente succeeded, notwithstanding every preparation had been made

for its defence: Major-general Walker overcame all opposition, and established himself securely in the place.

"And yet it is astonishing, even in the spring-tide of success, how the most trivial circumstances will damp the courage of the bravest, and check the most desperate in their career. The storming party of the fifth had escaladed a wall of thirty feet with wretched ladders, forced an uninjured palisade, descended a deep counterscarp, crossed the lunette behind it, and this was effected under a converging fire from the bastions, and a well-sustained fusilade, while but a few of the assailants could force their way together, and form on the rampart when they got up. But the leading sections persevered until the brigade was completely lodged within the parapet; and now united, and supported by the division who followed fast, what could withstand their advance?

"They were sweeping forward with the bayonet, —the French were broken and dispersed—when at this moment of brilliant success, a port-fire, which a retreating gunner had flung upon the rampart, was casually discovered. A vague alarm siezed the leading files — they fancied some mischief was intended, — and imagined the success, which their own desperate gallantry had achieved, was but a *ruse* of the enemy to lure them to destruction. 'It is a mine,—and they are spring-

ing it!' shouted a soldier. Instantly the leaders of the storming party turned — and it was impossible for their officers to undeceive them. The French perceived the panic, — rallied and pursued, — and friends and foes came rushing back tumultuously upon a supporting regiment (the 38th) that was fortunately formed in reserve upon the ramparts. This momentary success of the besieged was dearly purchased; a volley was thrown closely in, a bayonet rush succeeded, and the French were scattered before the fresh assailants never to form again. The fifth division rushed on: everything gave way that opposed it — the cheering arose above the firing — the bugles sounded an advance, — the enemy became distracted and disheartened — and again the light and fourth divisions, — or, alas! their skeletons, assisted by Hay's brigade, advanced to the breaches. No opposition was made; they entered, and Badajoz was their own! Philippon, finding that all was lost, retired across the river to San Christoval; and early next day, surrendered unconditionally."

The loss sustained by the allies in the reduction of this well-defended fortress was awful. In the assault alone, the British casualties were fifty-nine officers and seven hundred and forty-four men killed. Two hundred and fifty-eight officers, and two thousand six hundred men wounded!

Lord Wellington had stationed himself on

the high ground behind San Christoval, to view the progress of the assault. During a contest so doubtful and protracted, his anxiety was painfully acute. What a period of dreadful suspense must have ensued, from the time the striking of the town clock announced the marching of the divisions, until the thunder of artillery told the British leader that the conflict had begun! For a minute, the fireworks thrown from the place, showed the columns at the breaches. Darkness followed—stillness more horrible yet—and then the sudden burst of light, as shells and mines exploded. The main breach was literally in a blaze—sheets of fire mounted to the sky, accompanied by a continued roaring of hellish noises, as every villanous combustible was ignited to discover or destroy the assailants.

The wounded came fast to the rear, but they could tell little how matters were progressing. At last, a mounted officer rode up. He was the bearer of evil tidings—the attack upon the breaches had failed—the majority of the officers had fallen—the men, left without leaders to direct them, were straggling about the ditch, and unless instant assistance was sent, the assault must fail entirely. Pale but collected, the British General heard the disastrous communication, and issued orders to send forward a fresh brigade (Hay's) to the breaches. Half an hour passed, another officer appeared. He came from Picton to say the castle

had been escaladed, and that the third division was actually in the town.

Instantly staff officers were despatched to the castle with orders that it should be retained, and that the divisions, or rather their relics, should be withdrawn from the breaches.

Though the regular assaults had been sanguinary failures, the detached attacks upon the castle and San Vincente were brilliantly successful, and either of them must have next day produced the fall of Badajoz. In fact, the city was doubly won; and had Leith's division obtained their ladders in proper order, the place would have fallen in half the time, and a frightful loss of life have been consequently avoided.

It may be readily imagined that such a fierce resistance as that made by the French would provoke a desperate retaliation from the victors; and as the city was given up to the excited soldiery, for a day and two nights, it presented a fearful scene of rapine and riot. The streets were heaped with the drunken and the dead—and very many of the conquerors, who had escaped uninjured in the storm, fell by the bayonets of their comrades.

No language can depict the horrors which succeed a storm; and the following vivid but faithful picture of Badajoz, as it appeared on the evening after it had been carried, will convey some idea of the dreadful outrages that ensued.

"It was nearly dusk, and the few hours while I slept had made a frightful change in the condition and temper of the soldiery. In the morning they were obedient to their officers, and preserved the semblance of subordination; now they were in a state of furious intoxication—discipline was forgotten—and the splendid troops of yesterday had become a fierce and sanguinary rabble, dead to every touch of human feeling, and filled with every demoniac passion that can brutalize the man. The town was in terrible confusion, and on every side frightful tokens of military licence met the eye.

"One street, as I approached the castle, was almost choked up with broken furniture; for the houses had been gutted from the cellar to the garret, the partitions torn down, and even the beds ripped and scattered to the winds, in the hope that gold might be found concealed. A convent* at the end of the strada of Saint John was in flames; and I saw more than one wretched nun in the arms of a drunken soldier.

"Farther on, the confusion seemed greater. Brandy and wine casks were rolled out before the stores; some were full, some half drunk, but

* "A general officer had one of the soldier's wives stripped of her under-petticoat, by the provost, of which he had got an inkling, either by secret information, or by its obtruding itself on his notice, from being of red velvet bordered with gold-lace six inches deep, evidently the *covering of a communion-table.*"—*A Campaigner.*

more staved in mere wantonness, and the liquors running through the kennel. Many a harrowing scream saluted the ear of the passer-by; many a female supplication was heard asking in vain for mercy. How could it be otherwise, when it is remembered that twenty thousand furious and licentious madmen were loosed upon an immense population, among which many of the loveliest women upon earth might be found? All within that devoted city was at the disposal of an infuriated army, over whom for the time control was lost, aided by an infamous collection of camp followers, who were, if possible, more sanguinary and pitiless even than those who had survived the storm!

"It is useless to dwell upon a scene from which the heart revolts. Few females in this beautiful town were saved that night from insult. The noblest and the beggar — the nun, and the wife and daughter of the artisan — youth and age, all were involved in general ruin. None were respected, and few consequently escaped. The madness of those desperate brigands was variously exhibited; some fired through doors and windows; others at the church-bells; many at the wretched inhabitants as they fled into the streets to escape the bayonets of the savages who were demolishing their property within doors; while some wretches, as if blood had not flowed in sufficient torrents already, shot from the win-

dows their own companions as they staggered on below. What chances had the miserable inhabitants of escaping death when more than one officer perished by the bullets and bayonets of the very men whom a few hours before he had led to the assault?"*

Strict measures were taken on the second day by Lord Wellington to repress these desperate excesses,† and save the infuriated soldiery from the fatal consequences their own debauchery produced;‡ a Portuguese brigade was brought from the rear, and sent into the town, accompanied by the provost marshal and the gallows. This demonstration had its due effect, and the rope carried terror to rioters, whom the bayonets of a regiment could not appal.

* "The Bivouac."

† "Details," &c.

‡ "On entering the cathedral I saw three British soldiers *literally drowned in brandy*. A spacious vault had been converted into a spirit depôt for the garrison; the casks had been perforated by musket-balls, and their contents escaping, formed a pool of some depth. These men becoming intoxicated, had fallen head foremost into the liquor, and were suffocated as I found them."—*Table Talk of a Campaigner.*

RETREAT OF THE FRENCH.

Soult retreats.— Cavalry affair at Usagre.— Marmont invades Portugal. — Affair with the militias.—Retires into Spain. — Surprise and destruction of the works and bridge at Almarez.—Failure of Ballasteros at Bornos.

MARSHAL Soult had come up within two marches of Badajoz before he was apprised that the city had been carried by assault. Nothing could exceed his astonishment,* for he had been perfectly assured that the fortress was in no immediate danger; and that with Marmont's assistance, he could, by attacking the covering army, save Badajoz from falling. On ascertaining the disastrous issue of the siege, the French Marshal instantly retreated, and the British cavalry actively pursued him.

At Usagre, by a rapid night-march of Anson's and Le Marchant's brigades, Sir Stapleton Cotton overtook Soult's rear-guard, under the command of Peyreymont. The French having only observed Ponsonby, who led the advance, supposed that he was unsupported, and formed

* "Details," &c.

on a rising ground behind the Benvenida road. For a time, the English General delayed them by skirmishing, while Le Marchant, concealed by the heights, was getting quickly in their rear. This effected, Ponsonby charged boldly in front, while the fifth dragoon guards galloped round the hill, and unexpectedly threw themselves upon their flank. The French broke, and retired in great disorder, followed by the English cavalry, who for several miles pursued the flying enemy, cutting down numbers, and securing one hundred and thirty prisoners. The affair was a very gallant one,—and the more creditable to the victor, as the force on each side was nearly equal.*

Marmont, on his advance from Salamanca, after blockading Ciudad Rodrigo and investing Almeida, had pushed forward into Portugal, driving the militia back. Their leaders, Trant and Wilson, expecting assistance from Silviera, took a position at Guarda, to protect the magazines at Celerico; while the French marauding parties overran the lower Beira, wasting and plundering the country, and treating the peasantry with shameful cruelty. Unable, from his weakness, to hold Castello Branco longer, Le Cor, after removing the hospitals and destroying the magazines, fell back to Sarnadas.

Trant had formed the bold design of surprising

* The numbers, French and English, were about two thousand sabres each.

Marmont at Sabugal, but was in turn surprised himself. His outposts were cut off, and the French almost entering the streets, when a curious accident alarmed the Marshal, and prevented him from profiting by the earlier success of his night-march over the mountain.*

Trant fell back on the Mondego, and for a time the battalions retired in good order; but the rear-guard, on being pressed by Marmont's cavalry, gave way, and abandoning their arms and colours, endeavoured to cross the river.† Some were cut down, but many more drowned, in their ignominious attempt to escape; and to the humanity of the French Marshal the greater portion of the fugitives owed their safety, as Marmont discontinued the pursuit and arrested the work of slaughter.

Wilson remained in charge of the magazines at Celerico, until the French had advanced close to the place and driven in his outposts. The Portuguese General then issued orders to destroy the stores; fortunately, they were but partially obeyed, for Marmont immediately retired, left Guarda to the militia, and consequently a part of the magazines was saved.

Finding that his indefatigable opponent was

* "Details," &c.

† Marshal Beresford disbanded these regiments for their cowardice, and had a few of the runaways tried and executed at Coimbra.

marching northwards, Marmont fell farther back on Sabugal, and after raising the blockade of Rodrigo, again retreated on Salamanca.

The allied army immediately took up cantonments on the Coa and Agueda; and as an ample commissariate had been established behind the Douro, the troops were abundantly supplied.

The head-quarters were removed to Fuente Guinaldo, and Lord Wellington determined to re-establish his own communications across the Tagus,* and destroy those of the enemy. Both designs were accomplished with his usual success; and as military operations, the science displayed in the execution of the one was only equalled by the boldness that marked the daring manner with which the other was effected.

To interrupt the communications of the French Marshals, to whom he was about to oppose himself, was an object of paramount importance, and it was determined that an attempt should be made upon the pontoons and works at Almarez, it being the only passage practicable to an army since the permanent bridges on the Tagus, from Arzobispo, downwards, had been blown up. The French, aware of the value of this important

* The bridge at Alcantara had been rendered impassable by the blowing up of one of the arches. The ingenuity displayed by the engineers in rendering it available for the passage of an army, was most creditable to that department. —*Vide* "Details," &c.

passage, adopted every means within their power to protect it from being surprised, or assaulted with success. Both banks of the river were jealously fortified. The left of the Tagus being protected by a *tête-du-pont*,* regularly intrenched and flanked, and commanded by Fort Napoleon—a strong redoubt placed on the high ground above the bridge. The fort was secured with an interior intrenchment, with a loop-holed tower in the centre armed with nine pieces of cannon, and a garrison of four hundred men. Fort Ragusa, similar in strength and construction, commanded the right bank: it flanked the bridge with which it was connected by a *flèche*. At a league's distance, a pass for carriages, called the Puerto de Miravete, winds through a steep sierra and opens on an expanse of barren country entirely overrun with the gum-cistus.† There an old castle, standing on the

* *Têtes-du-ponts* are thrown up to cover a communication across a river, and favour the movements of an army advancing into, or retreating from, an enemy's country. The form, size, and strength of a *tête-du-pont* must be entirely regulated by locality and circumstances. A *tête-du-pont* may be composed of a horn-work defended by batteries on the opposite bank—or it may be a half square fort with bastions—or half a star fort—or redoubts disposed to flank each other.

† "Coming from Castille, the traveller descends from this ridge into a country, where, for the first time, the gum-cistus appears as lord of the waste; the most beautiful of all shrubs in the Peninsula for the profusion of its delicate flowers, and one of the most delightful for the rich balsamic odour which its

crest of the heights, was fortified and surrounded by an enciente twelve feet high. The large venta on the road side was formed into a place of defence, and with two smaller works that connected it with the castle on the brow of the hill, altogether formed a line of very considerable strength.

To destroy the bridge and works was a task intrusted to Sir Rowland Hill; and on the 12th of May he moved from Almandralejo, with part of the second division and six 24-pound howitzers. He reached Jaraicejo early on the 16th, within eight miles of the summit of the pass. There dividing his force into three columns, to each a separate duty was assigned. The left brigade, under General Chowne, were directed to escalade the castle of Miravete, and for this purpose were provided with ropes and ladders. The centre, under General Long, with the howitzers, marched by the great road to attack the Puerto; while by a devious and rugged foot-way, Sir Rowland himself moved by Romangordo, to carry the bridge-works upon the right. The columns moved the same evening, but owing to the difficulties of the ground they could not reach their intended points of attack before daybreak. Sir Rowland,

leaves exude under a southern sun; but which overspreads such extensive tracts, where it suffers nothing else to grow, that in many parts both of Portugal and Spain, it becomes the very emblem of desolation."—*Southey.*

therefore, deferred the attempt until he should personally examine the works, and the troops bivouacked on the Sierra.

It proved that the castle, from its peculiar position, would require time to secure its reduction—and the least delay must prove fatal to success. General Chowne was therefore ordered to make a false attack with the left brigade, while the right, under General Howard, should steal down the broken side of the Sierra, and attempt Fort Napoleon by a *coup de main.*

The plan, notwithstanding that many unexpected obstacles delayed the columns of attack, succeeded. The French, never supposing that the bridge would be attempted until the pass was first carried, and a passage opened for the guns, were astounded soon after daybreak, on seeing the 50th and a wing of the 71st rush from the cover of a hill, and commence an escalade in three different places. After a sharp resistance they abandoned the fort, and rushing through the *tête-du-pont,* retreated over the bridge to find shelter, as they hoped, in Fort Ragusa. But the coward who commanded there, panic-struck, had already destroyed the communication; and in a vain attempt to avoid the bayonets of their assailants, who followed them *pêll-mêll,* many perished in the Tagus, and the remainder, amounting to two hundred and fifty, including the governor, were made prisoners. Fort Ragusa was abandoned by

the commandant, and the redoubt, *tête-du-pont*, pontoons, and carriages, with an immense quantity of stores, were destroyed, the victors in this brilliant affair having sustained but a very inconsiderable loss. The commandant of Fort Ragusa retreated to Navalmoral. There he was placed under arrest—tried by a court-martial, and shot at Talavera, a fate the cowardly desertion of his own comrades so richly merited.*

Sir Rowland retired without molestation by the Truxillo road, and took up his former quarters at Merida. Too late, the intelligence of his march had reached the French Marshals — and though both took instant measures to save the bridge and intercept the expedition, their efforts were unavailing. Marmont reached the Tagus "too late to prevent the evil, and without the means of repairing it;" and Soult, finding that the British rear-guard had already passed Truxillo, gave up the hope of overtaking it, and retired to Seville.

A less fortunate attempt by Ballasteros was made on the French works on the line of the Guadalete. A division of the army of Andalusia, of four thousand five hundred men, under

* *Leith Hay's* account of the destruction of the bridge differs from *Southey's*. "Those who first succeeded in gaining the right bank cut away the three boats nearest to that end of the bridge, by which means the survivors of the garrisons of Fort Napoleon and the *tête-du-pont* were prevented escaping."

General Gorvoux, having occupied Bornos, the Spanish General assembled a force of six thousand at Majada de Ruiz over night, and crossed the Guadalete unnoticed. But, notwithstanding a surprise, the French easily repulsed the attack; and Ballasteros was driven across the river in confusion, and with the loss of a fourth of his entire force.

Nothing can prove the miserable inefficiency of the Spanish troops more strongly, than the result of this wretched attempt on Bornos. Every circumstance favoured it: in force they were stronger by a fourth; and yet an enemy inferior in number, and taken by surprise, not only routed their assailants, but would have literally destroyed them, had not the friendly waters of the Guadalete covered their ignominious flight.

ADVANCE FROM THE AGUEDA, TO THE BATTLE OF SALAMANCA.

Lord Wellington crosses the frontier.—Advances on Salamanca. —The convents besieged.—Marmont attempts their relief.— Operations of the French army.—Assault on Cayetano fails. —San Vincent set on fire.—Cayetano breached.—Both carried by the allies.—Marmont retires.—Is reinforced and advances.—Wellington falls back.—Operations on both sides. —A tempestuous night.—Observations.

EARLY in June the British divisions began to concentrate; and on the 13th the cantonments on the Agueda were broken up, and Lord Wellington crossed the frontier.

The condition of the army was excellent, and the most exact discipline was preserved, while all unnecessary parades were dispensed with. The march ended, the soldier enjoyed all the comforts he could command. If foot-sore, he had rest to recruit; if untired, he had permission to amuse himself. His arms and appointments were rigidly inspected, his supper cooked, his bivouac formed, and at sunrise he rose with the reveille, to resume with light heart and "gallant hope," the march that was to lead to victory.

The weather was fine, and as the route lay principally through forest lands, nothing could be more picturesque and beautiful than the country which the line of march presented. The wooded landscape displayed its verdure under the sunny influence of a cloudless sky, and singularly contrasted its summer green with the snow-topped pinnacles of the Sierra de Gata. No enemy appeared—for days the march was leisurely continued—until, on clearing the forest at Valmasa, the German Hussars in advance, had a slight skirmish with a French picket in front of Salamanca.

This city, celebrated for its antiquity, and noted in the middle ages as foremost among the most celebrated schools of learning, was destined to witness a fresh triumph of British bravery. The situation of Salamanca is bold and imposing, standing on high ground on the right bank of the Tormes, and surrounded by a fine champaign country, divested of wood, but interspersed with numerous clay-built villages. A Roman road can still be traced without the town—while a portion of the bridge across the Tormes, consisting of twenty-seven arches, is supposed to have been constructed when the Eternal City was mistress of the world.

The Duke of Ragusa, aware of the advance of the allies, collected all his disposable force, and occupied the heights south of the river; but during the night he evacuated the city, left the

forts he had constructed, amply stored with provisions and ammunition, and garrisoned by eight hundred men.

Early next morning the light brigade advanced, and cautiously felt its way through the villages which were found to be unoccupied. The whole army approached the city by brigades, and passing in open column of companies, the divisions moved barely out of cannon-shot of the fort, and directed their march on the fords of Santa Martha and El Campo, while the French stood upon the ramparts of San Vicente, looking with marked interest on the allied masses as they defiled across the plain.

The sixth division took possession of the city, while the others bivouacked in its immediate vicinity. Nothing could surpass the delight of the inhabitants when they found themselves liberated from a bondage that they had endured for three long years. The men shouted their vivas,—the women caressed their deliverers, — while in the evening music and dancing marked the general joy; and the illuminated streets might have been seen at the distance of many leagues.

But it was only for a brief time that the advance of the allies was interrupted. The convent of San Vicente, placed on a perpendicular cliff, rising from the bed of the Tormes, had been fortified by Marmont with admirable skill. It was connected at either side with the old wall by a

line of works, its windows built up and crenellated, and the re-entering angle secured by a fascine battery, palisaded in front, and defended by a loop-holed wall; a steep descent towards the bridge was separated from the opposite high grounds by a small rivulet that joined the Tormes, while the convents of La Merced and Cayetano, on the farther bank of the stream, were converted into strong redoubts, and ditched, escarped, and casemated. No pains had been spared by the French engineers to render these works respectable. The inhabitants had been obliged to lend their unwilling assistance; while, from the ruins of thirteen convents, and two-and-twenty colleges, the best materials for gates, palisades, and drawbridges, had been obtained. A place so capable of defence could not be left occupied by a hostile garrison in the rear of an advancing army; it must of necessity be reduced, and on the night of the 17th the sixth division broke ground, and in full moonlight commenced erecting a breaching battery.

Unforeseen obstacles in warfare will frequently render the best-devised plans abortive. The vigilance of a dog saved the counterscarp of San Vicente from being blown up, and the miners failed, after suffering a heavy loss from a plunging fire, from which they could not protect themselves. Carcasses were tried without effect. The guns, four long eighteens, and four 24-pound

howitzers, breached slowly, and it was the third morning before the lower wall of the convent was blown down. Its sudden fall brought the roof along with it, and a number of the defenders, then firing through the loop-holes, were buried in the ruins.

Marmont, who had retired from Salamanca with great reluctance, was actively engaged, in the mean time, in collecting reinforcements to enable him to recover the position he had abandoned. Breaking up from Fuente Sabrico he advanced with sixteen thousand men, determined to offer battle. A sustained cannonade along his line of march apprized the besieged garrisons that succour was approaching, and Lord Wellington made the necessary dispositions for a battle. The allied army were drawn up upon the heights; the left resting on a chapel and ravine, — the centre occupying the village of San Christolat,*— and the right formed on a high ground in front of Castellanos de los Moriscos. The advanced posts retired, and a smart cannonade was maintained by the batteries on both sides. Both were ready for a battle, but neither would give a chance away. Several well-executed manœuvres in front of the British position producing no important result, Marmont fell back upon the flat grounds beside the village of Vil-

* De la Cuesta.

lares, his right upon the road to Toro, and his left in Castellanos.

Morning broke, and found the allies under arms. That day some reinforcements reached the French, but Marmont would not venture to attack. Wellington remained on the defensive, and the rival armies bivouacked quietly in each other's presence. The weather was sultry; the heights unsheltered by a single tree; and as both wood and water were of necessity brought from Salamanca, the allies had but an indifferent supply of either. The French were better off; their bivouacs embraced several villages in the plain, the roofs and woodwork of the houses yielding materials for their watchfires, while the wells afforded a sufficiency of water, — an immense advantage indeed to an army when operating beneath an ardent sun.

Another day passed; but during the night Marmont seized an eminence on the right flank of the allied line, and occupied it in some strength, and it was deemed necessary to dislodge him. The 58th and 61st were ordered to attack the height: it was carried in fine style, and no attempt was made by the French Marshal to retake it.

On the following evening, Marmont changed his position, and endeavoured to communicate with the garrisons of San Vicente and the redoubts. His right now occupied the heights at

Cabeza Vellosa, his left rested on the Tormes at Huerta, and his centre in Aldea Rubia. A correspondent movement was made by Lord Wellington. His right was extended to San Martha, his advance to Aldea Lingua, and the heavy cavalry were detached across the river to check any attempt upon the fords.

The weather continued warm and dry, and as the whole surface of the position was covered with ripe corn, it supplied, in ample quantity, forage for the horses and beds to the soldiery. The country was unwooded, and the only shelter from an ardent sun was obtained by stretching blankets over sticks, and securing the edges to the ground. For this simple luxury Lord Wellington was indebted to a private of the 43rd, as his own accommodation was on a par with the humblest soldier. From break of day he occupied a height in the centre of the position, watching the movements of the French; his staff, from time to time, visiting him for orders. His meals were plainly served and rapidly despatched, and when night came, wrapped in his cloak, "the earth his bed, the sky his canopy," he slept on the same sward upon which his splendid divisions were reposing.

While the allied forces remained in position on the heights, the 6th division pressed the siege of San Vicente and the dependent forts as vigorously as their very limited means of aggression

would permit. The breaching battery erected against Cayetano having destroyed the palisades and injured the parapet, General Bowes, considering that an assault might succeed, attempted to carry it by escalade. Under a tremendous fire two ladders were reared against the wall; but the foremost of the assailants were shot, and the storming party were repulsed with the loss of their gallant leader, and one hundred and twenty killed and wounded. As the attack was made at sunset, the increased firing was distinctly heard by both armies. Gradually it slackened,—at length nearly died away,—and three rockets, thrown up from the fort, apprized Marmont that the assault had failed. The signal was answered by several rounds of artillery from the French position on the right. The musketry then ceased totally, and the remainder of the night passed undisturbed.

The morning of the 24th was obscured by a dense fog;—a brisk firing was heard beyond the river, but it was impossible to ascertain, from the thickness of the atmosphere, in what numbers the French movement was being made. At last the sun broke out, and Bock's heavy dragoons were seen retiring before a division which Marmont had thrown across the Tormes before daylight. Directly the 1st and 7th divisions were sent to support the cavalry. The French hesitated to attack,—manœuvred until evening,—

then repassed the river, and bivouacked on the ground they had quitted in the morning.

A quiet day succeeded. A supply of ammunition for the breaching batteries had arrived from Almeida, a spirited cannonade ensued, the British guns firing on San Vicente with hot shot. The inflammable materials with which the fort was built could not endure this destructive cannonade. The square tower was speedily in a blaze, and in a brief space of time it was totally consumed, while during the night the outworks were frequently on fire, and at ten o'clock next morning the whole convent was in flames. A breach had been made in the gorge of Cayetano, and the troops formed for the assault, when a white flag from the forts and redoubt announced that the garrisons of both would treat for a surrender. But delay appeared the chief object of the French commandant. Three hours were required by him before he should capitulate, and five minutes was the brief space that would be granted by the besiegers, and when that time elapsed the storming parties rushed forward,—the bastions were carried with feeble resistance, and San Vicente with trifling loss. Thirty-six pieces of cannon, seven hundred prisoners, and a quantity of stores and clothing, fell into the hands of the victors, who had lost some valuable officers and four hundred and fifty men before these well-defended works.

At midnight Marmont commenced retiring,—and when day broke his columns were in full march, and his rear-guard quitting its ground. The French set fire to the villages they had occupied, leaving behind them an exhausted country and an exasperated people. Nothing, indeed, could exceed the deadly hatred that actuated the peasantry against their oppressors, while the friendliest feelings were manifested towards the British, who were by every class regarded as deliverers. In Salamanca all was triumph and festivity. High mass was celebrated in the cathedral,* a grand dinner given by the commander of the allies, and a ball by the Junta in the evening was attended by the noblesse of the city, and witnessed the beauty of Spain united to the chivalry of Britain.

Marmont retired by Tora and Tordesillas on the Douro, and the allies, following his line of march, bivouacked on the Guarena. The French Marshal frequently made demonstrations as if he intended to make a stand; but aware that he should soon possess a numerical superiority over his able opponent, he only manœuvred to gain time, while leisurely falling back upon the line of the Douro, of which he possessed the whole command. This gave the French Marshal an immense advantage over his antagonist. He held the bridges, and of course had the means of cross-

* "Details," &c.

ing when he pleased, while on the whole river from the mouth of the Pisguera to Zamora, the ford of Castro Nuno, three leagues above Toro, is the only point by which an army could be passed over in the presence of an enemy.

If the French Marshal had this admitted advantage on his side, in the possession of the line of the Douro, he had certainly other difficulties to embarrass him. The guerillas were in force on his flanks and in his rear, intercepting his convoys, and gave full occupation to a part of his corps that were required for a different service. These irregular bands were incessantly on the alert, crippling his resources, and cutting off stragglers and supplies. Sormel and Bombon were on his right, Julian Sanchez on the left; Porlier disturbed the country between him and the Asturias, and Mina and Duran infested Navarre and Aragon. No wonder that Marmont expected Bonnet's junction, with a portion of the army of the north, with great anxiety. It was effected safely, and the Duke of Ragusa was now numerically superior to his rival, the entire French *corps d'armée*, amounting to forty-seven thousand men.

This increase of strength, when united to other considerations, induced Wellington to decide on falling back towards the frontier of Portugal. His military chest was nearly exhausted — supplies must be exacted, after the iniquitous system

of the French, or the army subjected to privations; and the very difficulty he must have found in removing his wounded to the frontier, in the event of a hostile collision, would be quite sufficient to deter a cautious general, and one so particular in attention to his troops when disabled, from counting a battle on the banks of the Douro.

Marmont lost no time in concentrating between Toro and San Roman. He passed the river on the evening of the 16th, while Wellington moved the allies to Camzal and Fuente le Pena. This was, however, a feint on the French Marshal's part. At night he recrossed the Douro, made a rapid movement on Tordesillas, passed the river there, and early on the 18th reached the Trebancos, after marching forty miles. This movement was well designed and ably executed. By it Marmont had placed himself in direct communication with the army of the centre, then moving from the capital to his support, while an advance to Castrejon, endangered Anson's brigade of cavalry, and the fourth and light divisions.

As morning broke, the outlying pickets in front of Castrejon were alarmed by a distant firing, which momently became louder and more sustained. Presently Bock's brigade were observed retiring before the enemy's dragoons and their light artillery. The British retreated

by scattered squadrons, and thus avoided the certain loss that a cannonade would occasion cavalry retiring in dense masses. The infantry fell back in perfect order, and though severely pressed by the French divisions, threatened by the dragoons, and occasionally under a fire of forty guns, reached the Guarena with trifling loss.

The bed of the river was nearly dry, but the troops found its scanty waters a luxury above price, after a ten miles' march, at times over vast corn-fields reaching above the knee and under a vertical sun, whose heat was most oppressive. The retreat was resumed again, when the French cavalry galloped up a hill commanding the line of march, with the intention of holding the division in check until the infantry could overtake and bring it to action. But the British had neared their reserves, and, tired of retreating, they halted and showed front. A French brigade accepted the challenge, and advanced instantly to the attack. The 27th and 40th regiments, led on by General Cole, threw in a close volley, cheered, and crossed bayonets; the enemy broke, the English cavalry galloped in, and a general, (Carrier,) a gun, and three hundred prisoners, were captured in the charge. The allied loss in the different affairs of the 18th, amounted to five hundred *hors de combat.*

That night, the allied troops halted on the

Guarena, their right extending beyond Canizal, and the left resting on Castrillo, while the French bivouacked on the opposite side of the valley. Fires blazed along the lines of either army, and the outposts lay so near each other "that the fixed sentinels almost received the secret whispers of each other's watch."

The night passed without alarm—all remained quiet until the following evening, when, at two o'clock, Marmont again marched by his left on Tanazora, endeavouring to turn the right of the allies. A counter movement was made by Lord Wellington, both armies marching in nearly parallel lines, while an occasional cannonade, and an extensive conflagration of corn ready for the sickle, told, at an immense distance, that the game of war was going on.

It was generally believed that a battle on the plains of Valesa was inevitable; and the troops bivouacked in two lines, and before daybreak were under arms. But with the first light, Marmont was seen again extending by his left, and the allies moved consequently in a parallel direction. Either commander might provoke an action, but neither seemed inclined to risk one. The French Marshal's design was very apparent. He kept the high ground, manœuvred to out-flank his opponent, and, should opportunity permit, attack him at advantage. His able antagonist, however, never gave the chance. The day passed

in manœuvring, and that night the French held Babila, Fuente, and Villamesa; the allies, Cabesa and Aldea Lingua.

The 21st was also spent in flank marching, during which both commanders crossed the Tormes; the French by the fords of Alba and Huerta, and the allies by Santa Martha and the bridge of Salamanca. The hostile armies bivouacked again that night, and such a night can scarcely be imagined.

The evening was calm and sultry, but the extreme verge of the horizon became heavily overcast, and persons conversant with "skyey influences" might have easily foretold a coming storm. It was now dusk, big drops began to fall, some of the brigades had already reached the ground marked out for their night positions, the guns were packed, and the horses of the cavalry picketed. Others were, however, only moving to their bivouacs; and Pakenham's, the third brigade, being separated from the remainder of the army by the Tormes, had guarded against sudden attack by entrenching the commanding height it rested on. Suddenly a torrent fell—the wind rose and swept across the open hills with amazing violence—the thunder clouds burst—and, by the glare of lightning, the sparkling arms of infantry masses were visible over the whole extent of the position, as the last brigades pressed through the tempest to occupy their grounds. No shelter the

allied army could obtain would have averted a summer shower. All in a few minutes were drenched to the skin; while the cavalry horses, scared by the lightning, broke from their picketings, and trampling upon their riders, rushed madly to and fro, occasioning indescribable confusion. Many of the animals were recovered by the exertions of the dragoons, but numbers of the men were injured in the attempt, and thirty horses, having got within Marmont's lines, were secured by the French. The allied position had its right upon one of two hills called the Arapiles; its left below the ford of Santa Martha; while its cavalry held Calvarasa de Abaxo. Marmont occupied Calvarasa de Arriba and a contiguous hill, called Neustra Senora de la Pena.

Nothing could be more imposing than the parallel movements of the rival armies during the last three days. Far as the eye could range, masses, apparently interminable, pursued their march with beautiful regularity—now displayed in brilliant sunshine as they swept over a contiguous height—now lost, where an accidental dipping of the ground for a time concealed the column. Generally both armies abstained from hostile collision, by a sort of mutual consent; and, excepting where the line of march brought the light troops into immediate proximity, or the occupation of a village produced a trifling fusilade, the grand movements of the rival hosts

exhibited a "ceaseless march," the leading columns pressing forward towards the Tormes, and the rear hidden from view "by dust and distance."

The whole system of manœuvres, which marked the operations of the French Marshal since Bonnet's division had joined him on the Douro, showed clearly that he only waited for a fitting moment to attack. The French army were in high spirits; while in numerical force they were formidable indeed, numbering forty-five thousand men, of whom four thousand were cavalry. Other circumstances were favourable to the commencement of active aggression by the French. The communications with the capital were open —reinforcements constantly arriving— while a powerful accession of strength had approached the immediate neighbourhood of the scene of operations from the army of the North; a part of its cavalry and horse-artillery having already reached Pollos.

If Marmont was anxious to offer battle, the British General, for obvious reasons, was as willing to accept it. Aware of his opponent's abilities in tactics, and apprised of the fine *matériel* of the army he commanded, Lord Wellington was as confident in his own resources as in the indomitable courage of that soldiery which, under his leading, had been frequently assailed and never beaten. His own position was daily becoming

more unsafe. For security, the stores deposited at Salamanca had been removed to the rear, consequently the maintenance of his army was endangered, as supplies from the depôts were tardily obtained. No difficulty, however, was experienced by the French in provisioning their army — every procurable necessary was exacted from the wretched inhabitants, who might curse while they dare not oppose those who despoiled them of their property. Both commanders were anxious to try the issue of a contest. Vanity, in the one, urged Marmont to offer battle upon ground favourable for the movements of a force superior in number and perfect in every arm. Prudence, in Lord Wellington, aimed at results only to be effected by a victory. No wonder, then, that with such dispositions a conflict was inevitable. The decree had gone forth — a fiery trial of skill and valour must ensue — and well did a fearful night harbinger "a bloody morrow."

BATTLE OF SALAMANCA.

Preliminary dispositions. — Marmont manœuvres to turn the right of the Allies.—A false movement is seized on by Wellington, who instantly attacks. — Opening, progress, and close of the battle of Salamanca.

The morning was cloudy and threatening, and the dawn was ushered in by a sharp fusilade, in the direction of Calvarassa de Ariba. The enemy's tirailleurs had occupied the heights of Senora de la Pena in considerable force, and part of the seventh division and the light cavalry of Victor Alten were opposing their farther advance.

The British right was appuied upon the nearest of the Arapiles, and united itself with the extremity of a ridge, on which the divisions had taken their position on the preceding evening. Another hill, similarly named, rose from the plain at a distance of five hundred yards, — and as it commanded the right of the alignement, it was deemed advisable to possess it.

The French Marshal, however, had entertained a similar design; and a wood favouring the unobserved advance of part of Bonnet's division,

the summit was occupied by the French with their 122nd regiment, and a brigade of guns.

Meanwhile the enemy commenced extending to the left, in the rear of the Arapiles, and formed on the skirts of a wood. As the movement of the columns brought them within cannon range, General Leith advanced a battery to a height in front of his position, and it opened with considerable effect. The French, obliged to retire, brought up a brigade of artillery to check the British guns. Their diagonal fire silenced the British battery,—and it was necessary, without delay, to retire the guns, and withdraw a troop of the 16th light dragoons, which, for their protection, had been drawn up under shelter of the hill. This perilous evolution was executed with complete success,—the ravine was passed at speed,—and with little loss the artillery and light cavalry regained the position.

The day wore on,—the late tempest apparently had cleared the atmosphere,—all was bright and unclouded sunshine,—and over a wide expanse of undulating landscape nothing obscured the range of sight but dust from the arid roads, or wreathing smoke occasioned by the spattering fire of the light troops. Marmont was busily manœuvring, and Lord Wellington coolly noticing from a height the dispositions of his oppenent, which he perfectly calculated would lead to a general engagement.

At noon, a combination of at least eight thousand men, moved from the rear of the Arapiles, and formed in front of the fifth division. Lord Wellington rode to the ground, and there found the division in perfect readiness for the anticipated attack. Perceiving at once that this movement was only a demonstration of the French Marshal to mask his real designs, his Lordship returned to the right, which was now the interesting point of the position.

Finding his feint upon the fifth division unsuccessful, Marmont put his columns into motion, and marching rapidly by his left, endeavoured to turn the right of the allies, and thus interpose between them and Ciudad Rodrigo. Under a heavy cannonade, his front and flank, covered by a cloud of skirmishers, and supported by a cavalry force that drove in the British dragoons and light troops, pressed forward to gain the Rodrigo road. But that hurried movement was badly executed by Marmont's generals of division. Their extension was made with careless haste, — the line consequently weakened; and this false manœuvre brought on the crisis of the day. The moment for action had come; and Lord Wellington seized the opportunity, and struck the blow.

At two o'clock, when the French commenced extending by their left, the allied army was thus disposed. On the right, the fifth division

(Leith's) had moved behind the village of Arapiles, and had taken ground on the right of the fourth (Cole's); the sixth and seventh, under Generals Clinton and Hope, formed a reserve; the third division (Pakenham's), D'Urban's cavalry, two squadrons of the 14th light dragoons, and a corps of Spanish infantry, were in position near Aldea Tejada. Bradford's brigade, with Le Marchant's heavy cavalry, were formed on the right, and in the rear of the fifth. The light division (Barnard's) and the first (the Guards and Germans) were drawn up between the Arapiles and the Tormes, in reserve. Cotton's cavalry were formed in the rear of the third and fifth divisions; an artillery reserve, posted behind the dragoons, and in the rear of all the Spaniards, under Don Carlos D'Espana, appeared in the extreme distance, but entirely out of fire.

Marmont had remarked, and rode forward to correct the irregularity of his flank movement, and personally direct the debouchement of his third and fourth divisions from the wood that had partially concealed them. At that moment Lord Wellington was seated on the hill-side, eating his hurried meal, while an aide-de-camp in attendance watched the enemy's movements with a glass. The bustle then perceptible in the French line attracted his lordship's notice, and he quickly inquired the cause. "They are evidently in motion," was the reply.—"Indeed!

what are they doing?"—"Extending rapidly to the left," was answered. Lord Wellington sprang upon his feet, and seized the telescope; then muttering that Marmont's good genius had deserted him, he mounted his horse, and issued the orders to attack.

All was instantly on the alert. The staff went off at speed to bring up the fifth and sixth divisions. The infantry stood to arms, primed and loaded, fixed bayonets, uncased the colours, and abandoning the defensive system, hitherto so admirably employed, prepared for an immediate attack.

Pakenham* commenced the action by advancing in four columns along the valley, assailing the left flank of the enemy, and driving it before him in great confusion. D'Urban's Portuguese dragoons, and Harvey's light cavalry (the 14th), protected the flank during the movement, and,

* "He (Lord Wellington) ordered Pakenham to move on with the third division, take the heights in his front, and drive everything before him. 'I will, my lord, by God!' was the laconic reply."—*Robinson's Life of Picton.*

"His answer to Lord Wellington, when the latter ordered him to attack, was not 'I will, my lord, by God!' but, 'Yes, if you will give me a grasp of that conquering right hand.'"—*Napier.*

Those who knew Sir Edward, will best decide between these versions of his answer. With chivalrous gallantry, Pakenham's modesty and gentleness of manner were proverbial. The curt and vapouring terms of his imaginary reply are in no keeping with his character, and Mr. Robinson, in common justice to his memory, should expunge them.

when the French became disordered, charged boldly in and sabred the broken infantry. Nothing could be more brilliant than Pakenham's advance. A level plateau of nearly eight hundred yards was to be crossed before the assailants could reach the heights, whither Foy's division were marching hastily to occupy the ground. A heavy fire from the French guns was showered on the advancing columns, while the British batteries, under Captain Douglass, replied by a furious cannonade. Wallace's brigade, 45th, 74th, and 88th, formed the first line, and moved forward in open column. The face of the height was covered with tirailleurs,* who kept up an incessant fusilade — while grape and cannister ploughed the ground, occasioning a heavy loss, and more particularly to the centre. They suffered, but they could not be checked; — not waiting to deploy, the companies brought forward their right shoulders in a run, forming line from open column without halting; while the wings of the brigade,

* "The two officers who carried the colours of the 88th regiment, and who were immediately in the rear of the mounted officers, thought that the shot was intended for either of them. Lieutenant Moriarty, carrying the regimental colour, called out, 'That fellow is aiming at me!' 'I am devilish glad to hear you say so,' replied Lieutenant D'Arcy, who carried the King's, with great coolness, — 'for I thought he had me covered.' He was not much mistaken: the ball that killed Murphy, after passing through him, struck the staff of the flag carried by D'Arcy, and carried away the button, and part of the strap of his epaulette."—*Reminiscences of a Subaltern.*

having moved up the hill with less impediments than the centre, were more advanced, and the line thus assumed rather the figure of a crescent. All the mounted officers, regardless of a withering fusilade, were riding in front of the battalions, and the men following with their muskets at the rest. At last they reached the brow. Foy's division, beating the *pas de charge*, advanced, and threw in a murderous volley. Half the British front rank went down. Staggered by that deadly fire, the brigade recoiled a step or two, but, instantly recovering, the rear rank filled the places of the fallen. On it went with imposing steadiness, regardless of the irregular fusilade, for the French continued to pour in their fire with more rapidity than effect.

Foy's division, alarmed by this movement, became unsteady. The daring advance of an enemy, whom the concentrated fire of five thousand muskets could not arrest, was indeed astounding. All that brave men could do was done by the French officers. They strove to confirm the courage of their troops, and persuade them to withstand an assault that threatened their wavering ranks. The colonel of the 22nd *legere*, seizing a musket from a grenadier, rushed forward, and mortally wounded Major Murphy of the 88th. Speedily his death was avenged—a Ranger shot the Frenchman through the head, who tossing his arms wildly up, fell forward and expired. The

brigade betrayed impatience; the 88th, excited to madness by the fall of a favourite officer, who passed dead along their front, as his charger galloped off with his rider's foot sticking in the stirrup, could scarcely be kept back. Pakenham marked the feeling, and ordered Wallace "to let them loose." The word was given — down came the bayonets to the charge — the pace quickened — a wild cheer, mingled with the Irish *slogan*, rent the skies—and unable to stand the shock, the French gave ground. The Rangers, and the supporting regiments, broke the dense mass of infantry, bayoneting all whom they could overtake—until, run to a regular stand-still, they halted to recover breath and stayed the slaughter.

Nor were the operations of the fifth division less marked and brilliant. For an hour they had been exposed to a heavy cannonade, sheltering occasionally on the ground from the shot and shells, which fell in showers upon the height they occupied, and ricochetted through their ranks. At last the order to advance was given. They moved in two lines, the first entirely British, the second composed of the Portuguese infantry of General Spry. Bradford's brigade, having united itself for the attack, formed on the right of the fifth.

In mounting the height where the French division was posted, the assailing columns were annoyed by a sharp discharge of artillery, and

the fire of a swarm of sharpshooters, who occupied in extended order the face of the hill. The British light infantry pushed on to clear the line of march, and, if practicable, make a dash at the enemy's artillery. The tirailleurs were speedily driven back, the cannon removed from the crest of the height to the rear, and, unimpeded, the division moved up the hill with a perfect regularity in its formation, and the imposing steadiness of men who marched to victory. "In the front of the centre of that beautiful line rode General Leith, directing its movements, and regulating its advance."

The enemy were preparing for the struggle. He retired his columns from the ridge, and formed continuous squares, fifty paces from the crest of the heights, which the assailants must crown previous to attacking. The artillery from the French rear cannonaded the advancing columns, but nothing could check the progressive movement of the British. "The men marched with the same orderly steadiness as at first; no advance in line at a review was ever more correctly executed; the dressing was admirable, and spaces were no sooner formed by casualties, than closed up with the most perfect regularity, and without the slightest deviation from the order of march."*

When General Leith reached the summit of

* Leith Hay.

the hill, the enemy were observed formed in supporting squares, with their front rank kneeling. Their formation was complete—their fire reserved—and till the drum rolled, not a musket was discharged. Nearly at the same moment, the French squares and the British line delivered their volleys. A dense smoke hid all for a time from view. A loud and sustained cheer pealed from the English ranks: no shout of defiance answered it; while rushing forward, the British broke the squares, and pressing on with dauntless impetuosity, every attempt at opposition ceased, and what just now appeared a disciplined body, almost too formidable to be assailed, became a disorganised mass, flying at headlong speed from the fury of its conquerors. To increase the confusion, a portion of Foy's division crossed the *déroute*, and mingled with it, while the rush of advancing cavalry was heard, and that sound, so ominous to broken infantry, confirmed the panic.

Presently the heavy brigade, 3rd and 4th dragoons, and 5th dragoon guards, galloped across the interval of ground, between the heights where the third division had made its flank attack, and the fifth its more direct one. Sweeping through a mob of half-armed wanderers, the brigade rode boldly at the three battalions of the French 66th, which had formed in six supporting lines, to check the advance of the conquerors, and afford time for the broken divisions to have their orga-

nization restored. Heedless of its searching fire, the British dragoons penetrated and broke the columns; numbers of the French were sabred, while the remainder were driven back upon the third division and made prisoners. Still pressing on, another regiment, in close order, presented itself; this, too, was charged, broken, and cut down. Nothing arrested Le Marchant's victorious career, until the ground gradually became obstructed with trees, embarrassing the movements of his cavalry, while it afforded a broken infantry ample time to rally, and engage horsemen at evident advantage.

Although the regiments of the heavy brigade in the course of these brilliant charges had of necessity become intermixed, and their line crowded, without intervals between the squadrons, they still pushed forward without confusion to charge a brigade that had formed under cover of the trees. The French steadily awaited the attack—within twenty yards their reserved fire was thrown in, and on a concentrated body of horse and at this short distance, its effect was fatal. General Le Marchant was killed — Colonel Elley badly wounded — while one third of the brigade were brought to the ground by that close and murderous volley. Still, those of the heavy dragoons who could keep their saddles, sustained nobly the reputation they had earned that day, and charging the French column home, penetrated

and dispersed it. A furious *mêlée* succeeded — the scattered infantry fighting desperately to the last—while the long straight sword of the trooper proved in English hands irresistible.

While the remnant of the cavalry brigade continued their pursuit, a small battery of five guns were seen upon the left. Lord Edward Somerset instantly galloped down, charged, and brought them off. The brigade was then retired, after a continued succession of brilliant charges that had lasted nearly an hour.

Of course the loss sustained was great. From three splendid regiments that had ridden into action, at least, one thousand strong, with difficulty three squadrons were formed in the evening—such being the number of men and horses rendered *hors de combat* during its late scene of brilliant but dear-bought success.

With such decided advantages, the battle might have been considered gained, and the French defeat inevitable. But the splendid successes attendant on the third and fifth divisions, with Bradford's Portuguese brigade, and the light and heavy cavalry, were nearly counterbalanced by the total failure of Pack's attack on the Arapiles, and the repulse of Cole's division by that of Bonnet.

The 1st and 16th Portuguese advanced to carry the height; it was occupied by a French battalion, and protected by a battery of guns. A

force of nearly two thousand men, led on in person by a "fighting general," should have wrested the hill from such inferior force, no matter how strong the ground might naturally have been. On this occasion, however, the attack proved totally unsuccessful—the Portuguese regiments recoiled from the fire—their officers endeavoured to rally them in vain. The attack on the Arapiles was consequently abandoned, the French left in undisturbed possession, and, unassailed themselves, they turned their musketry and cannon upon the flank and rear of Cole's division, who, under the impression that Pack's assault must have succeeded, had fearlessly advanced across the plain, driving Bonnet's corps before it, with the promise of as glorious results as had attended the gallant operations of the third and fifth.

At that moment, even when the fourth division believed itself victorious, its position was most dangerous—its very existence more than doubtful. Bonnet perceived Pack's failure, reformed his division, still numerically superior to his opponent's, advanced boldly against the fourth, and furiously attacked it, while from the crest of the Arapiles the French troops poured upon the now retreating columns a withering fire of grape and musketry. General Cole was carried off the field; Beresford, who had come to his relief, with a Portuguese brigade of the fifth, was also badly wounded. The British were falling fast; while

the French heavy cavalry, under Boyer, moved rapidly to support Bonnet, who was momentarily gathering strength from the junction of scattered soldiers, who had escaped the slaughter of the fourth and seventh French divisions, which had been *dêrouted* on the left.

Wellington marked the emergency, and ordered Clinton's division to advance. This fine and unbroken corps, numbering six thousand bayonets, pushed rapidly forward, confronted the victorious enemy who, with loud cheers, were gaining ground on every point, as the hard-pressed fourth division was driven back by overwhelming numbers. Bonnet, determined to follow up his temporary success, met Clinton's division manfully. For a time neither would give ground: a close and furious conflict resulted. The ceaseless roll of musketry, and the thunder of fifty guns told how furiously the battle-ground was disputed. Both fought desperately, — and though night was closing, the withered grass, blazing on the surface of the hill, threw an unearthly glare upon the combatants, and displayed the alternations that attended the " heady fight." But the British bayonet, at last, opened the path to victory. Such a desperate encounter could not endure. The French began to waver,—the sixth division cheered, pushed forward, gained ground, — while, no longer able to withstand an enemy who seemed determined to sweep everything

before it, the French retired in confusion, leaving the hard-contested field in undisputed possession of the island conquerors.

Darkness fell. The remains of Bonnet's division found shelter in the woods, or crossed the Tormes at the ford of Alba, which, from its natural strength, the Spaniards could have successfully defended. The conflict, at different points, had raged six hours with unabated fury; and those of the divisions which had been engaged, exhausted with fatigue, and suffering dreadfully from heat and thirst, rested on the battle-ground.

The Guards, Germans, and light brigade, who had been in reserve during the day, pushed forward in pursuit. Distant musketry was heard occasionally—gradually this spattering fire ceased, and the groans of dying men and wounded horses succeeded the headlong rush of cavalry, the thunder of a hundred guns, the shout of proud defiance, and, wilder still, the maddening cry of Victory!

APPENDIX

TO THE FIRST VOLUME.

GENERAL FOY'S OBSERVATIONS

ON THE CHARACTER AND COMPOSITION

OF THE

FRENCH, BRITISH, AND SPANISH ARMIES.

WAR, considered as a technical science, has made constant but slow advances, from the first employment of gunpowder to the revival of the equal step in marching, and to the improved system of firing of the Prussian armies. It will now, probably, remain stationary till some capital discovery shall produce a revolution in the arts. In fact, twenty-four years of battles fought by the French with nearly the whole world, have not suggested any alteration in the principal weapon of the moderns,—the musket provided with the bayonet; and the science of tactics has not materially advanced beyond the combinations devised by the great Frederick.

The Imperial army of France was more scientifically regulated, more plentifully supplied with

money, clothing, arms, and ammunition, than the armies of the Republic had ever been.

After the Revolution the general officers of the French army exchanged the vague denomination of lieutenant-general, and maréchal de camp, for those of general of division and general of brigade, as more precise and significant. Bodies of infantry, consisting of three battalions, were then called demi-brigades; but Napoleon afterwards restored the name of regiment, and gave the rank of colonel to its chief. A regiment usually consisted of three battalions (though in the Peninsular war they were formed into five battalions of six companies each), and possessed but one eagle, which usually accompanied the first battalion. The battalion of infantry consisted of nine companies, including one of grenadiers. Napoleon subsequently added a picked company called *voltigeurs*, composed of men of small stature, but intelligent and active.

These *voltigeurs* constituted the light infantry of the French armies, and habitually performed the service of *tirailleurs*. An action always commenced with swarms of tirailleurs on foot and on horseback: this species of fighting favoured the developement of individual faculties, and was eminently suited to the restless spirit and courage in attack peculiar to the French. This mode of combat was an innovation upon the old system of tactics, and foreigners ascribed the first suc-

cesses of the French armies to the prodigal use of light troops. The tirailleurs harassed the enemy, escaped from his masses by their velocity, and from his artillery by their dispersion. No army has its flanks wholly impregnable; there will always be found gaps that favour the assailant—into these the tirailleurs rushed by inspiration; a weak point once discovered, all vied in their efforts against it. The flying artillery—another innovation upon the old school, dashed up at a gallop, and discharged their pieces in the very teeth of the enemy. The main army moved in the direction thus pointed out to it; the infantry in columns; the cavalry interposed by regiments or in squadrons, ready for every emergency that the battle might present. To withstand the shock of French troops thus brought into action, the German armies, apathetic in the cause for which they were contending, and commanded by sexagenarian generals, were manifestly inefficient. It satisfied their ideas of the art of war if the flanks were turned or merely passed; their cumbrous masses, drawn up laboriously in right lines, then quickly, broke. The French foot-soldiers of five feet high, brought in the giants of Germany and Croatia as prisoners by hundreds; the horse-chasseurs made themselves masters of the enemies' guns and their ill-appointed trains; and the fugitives owed their safety to the firmness of their heavy cavalry, which was at first superior to the French. The regula-

tions for the infantry manœuvres were constantly varied in their practical application by the most intelligent commanders, to suit the exigencies of modern warfare. In this manner was adopted the practice of facing and fighting with the third rank as well as the first; movements were also frequently made upon two ranks to show that the third is only a reserve intended to support the other two; the square, which the Arabs had taught the French to adopt in Egypt, became a fundamental formation for infantry. The successive firing by ranks was found the most suitable to employ against cavalry, from its not having the defenceless intervals of the battalion fire, and also from its not interfering so much with the use of the bayonet.

Cavalry cannot be organized upon the same plan of uniformity as infantry; it requires different arms, equipments, and horses, according to the peculiar purposes for which they are required. Napoleon endeavoured to render the varied character of the cavalry more distinct. The heavy cavalry (cuirassiers) was reduced to the number indispensable for its employment in pitched battles. The dragoons, an amphibious creation of an age when fire-arms were not brought to perfection, were nearly disorganized preparatory to the intended expedition to England: part of them were dismounted; this change furnished, instead of good cavalry, a small increase

of indifferent and expensive infantry. When afterwards remounted, they supplied almost exclusively the whole service of the cavalry in the Peninsular war. During the latter years of the Imperial Government, several regiments of dragoons were converted into lancers. Montecuculli calls the lance, "*la reine des armes blanches*:" this weapon, from its reaching farther than any other, is indeed the most formidable employed by cavalry.

The horse-chasseurs and the hussars, who differ only in certain modifications of their uniform, were the easiest to mount, recruit, and train, and were found to be of the most service in war; Napoleon, accordingly, increased their number. The cavalry of the line consisted in 1807 of two regiments of carabineers, twelve of cuirassiers, thirty of dragoons, twenty-four of chasseurs, and ten of hussars, making a total of seventy-eight regiments.

The cavalry retained the monarchical physiognomy longer than the infantry. The Revolution had not improved their quality; during the first campaigns they could, therefore, scarcely cope with the German cuirassiers, the Walloon dragoons, and the Hungarian hussars. Large bodies of French cavalry were then seldom employed together, and when brought into the field in masses were most frequently worsted. The French are not naturally good horsemen, a great

part of the soil being cultivated with the aid of oxen; and, from the restless vivacity of the national character, they find it difficult to identify themselves with the horse.

With these defects it was to be apprehended that the cavalry would decline. The contrary happened eventually, and may be partly accounted for by the facilities that conquest afforded in furnishing remounts, and in introducing finer breeds of horses. The horse-soldiers, moreover, sustained less loss than the infantry, and the old regiments, by means of provisional augmentation, constantly adding to their force, acquired an abundance of veteran soldiers. Young men of family, mostly impatient of the austere discipline of the infantry, readily furnished active, ardent, and well-mounted horsemen. The principal cause of the unhoped-for improvement in the French cavalry, however, must be ascribed to the system adopted by Napoleon for the conduct of that arm in war.

It was no sooner better instructed and better mounted than it became more terrible to its adversaries, and its employment was not confined, as it used to be, to the completion of the victory. It entered the lists against unbroken masses of infantry and cavalry, and its ardour sometimes decided the fate of battles.

Officers of cavalry, like the Neys and the Richepanses, were thinly strewed in the armies of

the Republic. But at the head of the Imperial squadrons were seen Murat, Lasalle, Kellermann, Montbrun, and other men, who excelled in the art of regulating and directing vast "hurricanes of cavalry." The decision so requisite in a commander-in-chief should also be possessed by the general of cavalry. With a *coup d'œil*, as rapid as lightning, he must combine the vigour of youth, a powerful voice, and the agility and address of a centaur. Above all, it is requisite that he should be prodigally endowed with that precious faculty which no other can replace, and which is more rare than is generally supposed,—unflinching bravery.

The French artillery, previously to the Revolution, had the reputation of being the first in Europe. It was in the regiment of La Fère, the first of that arm, that Buonaparte commenced his military career. The artillery participated in the enthusiasm of the Revolution, but its discipline scarcely suffered. It took an active part in the defence of the country, and in the offensive movements of the armies in 1792 and 1793. At that time great numbers of cannon were employed in battle. The four-pounders were attached to battalions of infantry; the howitzers, the eight, the twelve, and even the sixteen-pounders, particularly appropriated to sieges, then formed batteries of six to twelve guns, called batteries of position. An improvement suited to French impetuosity

had recently been borrowed from the Prussians, for the field-service. It consisted in mounting on horseback a certain number of gunners, who, by that means, arrived on the ground as quickly as the best-horsed pieces, were always at hand to work them, and could readily avoid being attacked. This kind of artillery kept up the cannonade longer and closer. The horse artillery was composed, on its first formation, of the nimblest artillery-men, and was afterwards recruited with the *élite* of the grenadiers, and performed prodigies of valour and service. In the campaigns in Germany, mere captains of that arm were seen to acquire the reputation of generals. It was not long before the generals would not have any other artillery, as from being more moveable and more efficient, less of it was required, and the columns of the train were lightened in proportion.

It was frequently proposed to Napoleon to unite the artillery and the engineers; he had not the imprudence to try the experiment; but he collected the pupils of both arms in an institution, to which the Polytechnic School served as a nursery. This school, after having been a focus of light to France and Europe, was re-constructed on a narrower and less liberal plan. The profession of arms took the preference of all others in the mind of Napoleon. He transformed a nursery of savans into a seminary for warriors.

In the rear of the *corps d'armée* of Napoleon marched a reserve, which never had its equal. The Imperial Guard represented the glory of the army, and the majesty of the empire. Its officers and men were selected from among those, whom the brave had designated as the bravest; all of them were covered with scars. Bred amid dangers, they had lived much in a few years; and the name of THE OLD GUARD was appropriately given to a corps, the oldest members of which had not reached the age of forty. Though loaded with favours by the Emperor, yet their recompense was always inferior to their service. Carried to fields of battle on foot by forced marches, in boats, or in carriages, the news of their arrival on the scene of action always struck terror into the hearts of their enemies. By successive augmentations the Emperor raised the effective of his guard to sixty-eight battalions, thirty-one squadrons, and eighty pieces of artillery. In the days of his prosperity he employed it only in detached portions: fifteen years it remained standing amidst the vicissitudes of the empire, solid as a *pillar of granite.* One day it succumbed; on the tombs of these heroes our descendants will inscribe these words, which were uttered during the heat of that fatal conflict:—"The Guard may perish, but will never surrender!"

The English were looked upon by the French as sea-wolves, unskilful, perplexed, and powerless, the moment they set their foot on land. If their national pride appealed to the victories of Cressy, Poitiers, and Agincourt, they were reminded that the armies of Edward III. and of Henry V. were composed of Normans, of the people of Poitou, and of Gascons. There were, for all that, among the conquerors, a goodly number of native Englishmen, and certainly, the blows which they dealt were not the weakest. The Black Prince and Talbot were born in Albion. Nearer our own times, Marlborough and his twelve thousand soldiers were not the least formidable enemies of Louis XIV. The celebrated column of British infantry at Fontenoy had suggested to a second Bossuet the image of a tower repairing its own breaches.

Even since the *éclat* of French glory had thrown into shade both ancient and modern history, there had been remarked in the British troops employed in Flanders, and in Holland, though feebly commanded, repeated instances of vigour and audacity. The French soldiers, who had returned from Egypt, talked to their comrades of the indomitable valour of the English: moreover, it was easy to suppose that enterprise, capacity, and courage render the possessors fit for other purposes than the duties of the sea service. Their skill and intrepidity in braving the dan-

gers of the ocean have always been unrivalled. Their restless disposition, and fondness for travelling fit them for the wandering life of the soldier; and they possess that most valuable of all qualities in the field of battle—coolness in their strife.

The glory of the British army is based principally upon its excellent discipline, and upon the cool and sturdy courage of the people. Indeed we know of no other troops so well disciplined. The principal causes of their pre-eminence in this respect, would, if applied to the French army, most likely produce an effect diametrically opposite. Varieties of character and condition, require the employment of different means to obtain the same end.

The English non-commissioned officers are excellent; but their courage and their talent are not encouraged by promotion to higher grades. They are nominated by the commander of the regiment, and cannot be broke but by the sentence of a court-martial. Their authority is extensive, comprehending the minute details of inspection, of discipline, and of daily instruction, duties which, in other armies, would not be committed to them.

In the British army will not be found either the strong sympathy between the leaders and the soldiers, the paternal care of the captains, the simple manners of the subalterns, nor the affectionate fellow-feeling in danger and suffering

which constituted the strength of the revolutionary armies of France; but unshaken patriotism, and tried and steady bravery, are to be met with everywhere amongst them.

The infantry, when in active service, is distributed into brigades of two, three, and even four regiments, according to the number and strength of the battalions. The grenadiers are not distinguished among the other soldiers for the *éclat* and pre-eminence so striking in the French and Hungarian grenadiers; and it is not customary to unite them into separate corps, in order to attempt bold strokes. The light companies of different regiments are sometimes formed into provisional battalions; a practice directly in opposition to the purpose for which that species of troops was originally instituted.

Several regiments of the line, such as the forty-third, the fifty-first, the fifty-second, &c. are called *light infantry regiments.* These corps, as well as the light companies of the battalions, have nothing light about them but the name; for they are armed, and, with the exception of some slight change in the decorations, clothed like the rest of the infantry. It was considered that the English soldier did not possess sufficient intelligence and address to combine with the regular duty of the line the service of inspiration of the sharp-shooter. When the necessity of a special light infantry began to be felt, the best marks-

men of different corps were at first selected; but it was afterwards found expedient to devote exclusively to the office of sharp-shooters the eight battalions of the sixtieth, the three of the ninety-fifth, and some of the foreign corps. These troops are armed with the rifle. During the last war, companies of these riflemen were always attached to the different brigades. The echoing sound of their horns answered the twofold purpose, of directing their own movements, and of communicating such manœuvres of the enemy as would otherwise be unobserved by the general in command.

The English, the Scotch, and the Irish are usually mixed together in the regiments. Ireland supplies more soldiers, in proportion to its population, than the other two kingdoms. It might be supposed that the general character which we have attributed to the English troops would be altered by this mixture; but the English discipline is like the bed of Procrustes to all who come within its sphere,—the minds as well as the bodies of their fellow-subjects obey their law as the ruling people. Four Highland regiments, consisting of nine battalions, are, however, recruited almost exclusively from the mountains of Scotland, and their officers are selected in preference from natives of that country. The Highlanders wear their national *kilt* instead of smallclothes: this neither harmonizes with the rest of their

dress nor is it convenient for war; but this is of little moment compared with the moral advantages gained by adopting the national costume: a distinction which has its source in popular feeling and customs generally, imposes the performance of additional duty: there are no troops in the British service more steady in battle than the Scotch regiments.

The infantry is the best portion of the British army. It is the *robur peditum,* the expression applied by the Romans to the *triarii* of their legions. The English do not scale mountains, or scour the plain, with the suppleness and rapidity of the French; but they are more silent, more orderly, and more obedient, and for these reasons their fire is better directed, and more destructive. Though not so resigned under a heavy fire as the Russians, they draw together with less confusion, and preserve their original formation better. Their composition exhibits something of the German mechanism, combined with more activity and energy. The system of manœuvres which they have adopted since the year 1798, is borrowed from the Prussians. The infantry, although on system formed three deep, like the other armies of Europe, is more frequently drawn up in two ranks, but when making or receiving a charge it is frequently formed four deep. Sometimes it has made offensive movements, and even charged columns, when in open order. In a retreat it stands

firm, and commences its fire by volleys from the battalions, followed by a well-supported file firing. It turns round coolly to check the enemy hanging on its rear; and while marching, it fires without separating.

The English infantry does not hesitate to charge with the bayonet; the leader, however, who would wish to employ British infantry to advantage, should move it seldom and cautiously, and reckon more upon its fire than upon its manœuvres.

The pains bestowed by the English on their horses, and the superior qualities of their native breeds, at first gave a more favourable idea of their cavalry than the experience of war has justified. The horses are badly trained for fighting. They have narrow shoulders and a hard mouth, and neither know how to turn nor to halt. Cropping their tails is a serious inconvenience in hot climates. The luxurious attentions which are lavished upon them, render them quite unfit to support fatigue, scarcity of food, or the exposure of the bivouac. The men are, however, excellent grooms.

The heaviest English cavalry is far from possessing the uniformity and the firm seat of the French and Austrian cuirassiers; and their light-horse is still more inferior in intelligence and activity to the Hungarian hussar and the Cossack. They have no idea of the artifices of partisan warfare,

and they know as little how to charge *en masse.* When the fray commences, you see them equally vulnerable and offensive, cutting instead of thrusting, and chopping with more fury than effect at the faces of their enemies.

During the war in the Peninsula, the French soldiers were so struck with the elegant dresses of the light dragoons, their shining helmets, and the graceful shapes of the men and horses, that they gave them the name of *Lindors.* In 1813, this dress, which was peculiar to the British troops, was exchanged for the head-dress and jacket of the German light cavalry. The Polish lances at Albuera, and the French cuirasses at Waterloo, have induced the English to add these modes of arming and equipment to their cavalry.

In cavalry service it is not sufficient for the soldiers to be brave, and the horses good; there must also be science and unity. More than once, in the Peninsular war, weak detachments of British cavalry have charged French battalions through and through, but in disorder; the squadrons could not be again re-formed; there were no others at hand to finish the work; thus, the bold stroke passed away, without producing any advantage.

The artillery holds the first rank in the army; it is better paid, its recruits are more carefully selected, and its period of enlistment is limited

to twelve years. The gunners are distinguished from other soldiers by their excellent spirit. In battle they display judicious activity, a perfect *coup d'œil,* and stoical bravery.

The English got the start of the French in the formation of the artillery-train: the first trials of it were made in 1793, under the auspices of the Duke of Richmond, then Master-general of the Ordnance. The corps of *Royal Artillery Drivers* is organized as soldiers. Very high prices are paid for the horses employed to draw the guns, and they are, consequently, extremely good. The harness is as good as that used in French carriages. No nation can rival the English in the equipments and the speed of their conveyances.

English troops take few pieces into the field with them; the most that Lord Wellington ever had in the Peninsula, barely amounted to two for every thousand men. Frames, caissons, barrels, and bullets, powder, and every part of the equipage are remarkable for the goodness of the materials, as well as excellent workmanship. In battles, the artillery made most copious and effective use of a kind of hollow bullet, called *Shrapnell's spherical case shot,* from the name of the inventor.

In conclusion, it may be said, that the English army surpasses other armies in discipline, and in some particulars of internal management;

it proceeds slowly in the career of improvement, but it never retrogrades; and no limits can be affixed to the power of organization to which a free and intelligent people may attain.

The military profession is quite in accordance with the contemplative character, and innate indolence of the Spaniards; yet they manifested an extreme repugnance to military service, and especially to that of the infantry. Voluntary enlistment was almost entirely confined to the towns, and was supplied from the vicious and reckless portion of society. A long peace, the insulated position of the country, and the lethargy of the Government, had almost extinguished the old warlike spirit of Spain. While the din of arms resounded throughout the rest of Europe, even the shadow of war was rarely to be seen in Spain. The sovereign never appeared in the garb of a soldier; the nobility had forgotten at what price their grandeur and titles had been purchased by their ancestors; arms had scarcely the dignity of a profession. There were no camps for the performance of manœuvres, none of those large garrisons, in which regiments learn to know each other and to act together. In the neglected state of the Spanish army, even the sacredness of the point of honour had fallen into a state of relaxation.

Nature has endowed the Spaniard with most

of the qualities required to form a good soldier. He is religious, calm, and attached to order and justice, he is naturally disposed to subordination, and is capable of great devotion to an able leader. His patience is inexhaustible, he is always sober, and so temperate that he can live upon a pilchard, or a bit of bread rubbed with garlic; a bed is a superfluity to him, as he is accustomed to sleep in the open air. Next to the French, the Spaniards are the best for long marches, and climbing mountains. The Spanish soldier is less intelligent than the French, but more so than the German and English soldier. He ardently loves his country, and has but one anti-military fault, a disregard of cleanliness, and indolent habits, a frequent source of disease and inefficiency. The Spanish army was deficient in discipline; its non-commissioned officers were but little respected; one-third of the officers were taken from among them: the remaining two-thirds were filled up from the cadets.

The Spanish infantry consisted of thirty-nine regiments, of three battalions each; including four foreign regiments. Several of these corps were established prior to the accession of the Bourbons; some of them were even raised by Charles V.; the oldest of all, bore the name of Immemorial del Rey, from the remote antiquity of its creation. Twelve battalions of light infantry, armed like the infantry of the line, dif-

fered from it only in the colour of the jacket, which was blue, while that of the national infantry was white. Most of these battalions were raised subsequently to the French Revolution. Each regiment of infantry of the line had a colonel, a lieutenant-colonel, a commandant, with the rank of lieutenant-colonel, and a major (*sarjento mayor*). Each battalion of light infantry had only two superior officers, a commandant, and a major. The battalions of the line were of four companies, two companies of the first battalion being grenadiers.

In war time, forty-two regiments of militia formed a body of infantry, more national, more brave, more calculated for great things than the regular infantry. The State armed, clothed, and equipped them, and allowed pay to the officers. In time of peace they were called out only for one month in the year, when they received pay. These militia regiments consisted of only one battalion, commanded by a colonel,—a man of consideration in the country, and a major, generally a superior officer of the regular army. There were but two companies in the battalion, one of grenadiers, and one of chasseurs. In war time, the companies of grenadiers and of chasseurs of the same province, were united. In this manner were formed the four divisions of provincial grenadiers of old and new Castile, Andalusia, and Galicia—the best soldiers in the nation, preferable even to

the household regiments. History has consecrated the plains of Rocroi as the grave of the Spanish infantry.

The cavalry preserved its ancient renown till the close of the war of the Succession. It has lost it since then. Spain, which in the time of Charles V. could supply a hundred thousand horses for war, now has breeding establishments in only one of her provinces. The Andalusian horses, though mettlesome, docile, and finely-formed, have something of the rodomontade of that province, which is the Gascony of Spain. They want the bottom, and the muscular power which are requisite for the charging shock of heavy cavalry, and have not the robustness and capacity for enduring fatigue, which is necessary for the light cavalry service. The multiplication of mules has probably caused the degeneracy of the Spanish horses.

The whole cavalry of Spain amounted to twelve thousand men, in twenty-four regiments, each of five squadrons, which were never complete. Each regiment is commanded by a colonel, a lieutenant-colonel, and a major. The cavalry was composed of dragoons, chasseurs, and hussars; but distinguished from each other rather by the colour of their uniform than by the mode in which they were armed and equipped. The carabineers, which formed part of the King's household, consisted of six squadrons, four of heavy, and two

of light horse, and numbered about six hundred men. They were recruited from the whole of the cavalry, among the old soldiers, and those of the best character; they enlisted for life, and renounced marriage: this was the finest body of horse in Spain. The Spanish cavalry was badly trained, and was very inferior to the infantry.

Philip V. employed La Valliere, the most distinguished French officer of artillery of his time, to organize the Spanish artillery on the same footing as that of Louis XIV. It has since followed the changes and improvements adopted by the French. Its force consisted of four regiments of ten companies each; out of these forty companies, six were of horse artillery. Besides these, there were sixty-four companies of militia cannoneers without officers or serjeants, being merely supplementary to the regular artillery. There was no artillery train organized in a military manner; in time of war, it was supplied by contracts with the muleteers, or by requisitions of oxen. Godoy organized the engineer corps in 1803, on a similar plan to the artillery, based upon the regulations of the French service, and instituted a school of engineering at Alcala de Henares.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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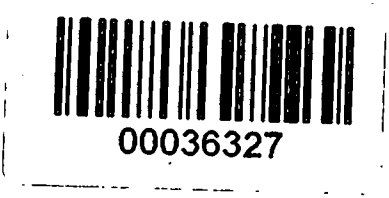
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